

BRISTOL RECORD SOCIETY'S
PUBLICATIONS

General Editors: MADGE DRESSER
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VOL. 66

MANNING THE ROYAL NAVY IN BRISTOL:
LIBERTY, IMPRESSMENT AND THE STATE, 1739–1815

MANNING THE ROYAL
NAVY IN BRISTOL:
LIBERTY, IMPRESSMENT
AND THE STATE, 1739–1815

EDITED

BY

NICHOLAS ROGERS

Published by
BRISTOL RECORD SOCIETY
2014

ISBN 978 0 901538 35 2

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The Society acknowledges with thanks the continued support of the Bristol Record Office, the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England.

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Produced for the Society by
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This set of documents on Manning the Royal Navy in Bristol flows out of my book on *The Press Gang*, in which I wrote a chapter on the problems on impressment in Bristol and Liverpool. Madge Dresser suggested that I produce a volume for the Bristol Record Society and encouraged me along the way as I endeavoured to transcribe and expand on the material I had gathered. I am very grateful to her for her support and patience throughout this project, as I am to Elaine Stavro, who put up with my long hours in the National Archives during our visits to London.

Working in the National Archives has been greatly facilitated by the efficiency of the staff and the rapid production of volume after volume of Admiralty letters that form the backbone of this collection. Most of the relevant documents were digitally photographed by the editor, but I would like to thank Ronnie Morris for taking time out from his own research to photograph those of 1810 and 1811. Thanks also to Ashley Geiser for helping with the index to this volume.

I should also like to thank the archivists of the Bristol Record Office for the help they have given me with the local records of impressment, and to the staff of various libraries – the Bristol Reference Library, the Mills Library at McMaster University, Hamilton, and the Robarts Library at the University of Toronto – for providing me with copies of provincial newspapers that rounded out my research into the Charles Burney collection of newspapers, housed in the British Library but now accessible on line.

Finally I would like to thank my daughter, Kate Greenslade, for enhancing some of my images, and my sister, Sally Powell, for free accommodation in London. In Bristol, Madge Dresser, Steve Poole and Janette Kerr were hospitable and convivial hosts. It is a pleasure to make some contribution to the history of my native city, and the company of UWE historians make it more so.

ABBREVIATIONS

TNA	The National Archives, London
Adm	Admiralty Records
BRO	The Bristol Record Office
SMV	Records of the Society of Merchant Venturers

EDITORIAL CONVENTIONS

Most of the documents in this collection are letters of captains to successive secretaries of the Admiralty about the problems of manning the fleet in Bristol and providing convoys for merchant shipping. Standard English was slowly coming into vogue and so spelling and capitalization is erratic, particularly in the mid-eighteenth century. I have retained this, although in the interests of clarity I have altered the punctuation. Sea captains had a tendency to use many commas and write run-on sentences with too many subordinate clauses, none of which helps the modern reader. I have also standardized the possessive case, something that naval officers often ignored, although occasionally I have retained the ungrammatical original to capture the texture of a letter from a writer struggling to make him or herself understood. In the regular correspondence of captains, I have also abbreviated and sometimes omitted the parting phrases, which today seem excessively formal and formulaic. I have retained these phrases for letters of supplication, where authors are asking the Admiralty for favours or concessions. Here they are an important part of the language of petition and their nuances are of some significance. In the interest of intelligibility I have sometimes paraphrased a letter or part of its contents. This is registered by an asterisk and by an indented entry. Marginal comments have been retained in the original, but sometimes the scrawl is such that I have again summarised the general drift of the contents, again with an asterisk. Nineteenth century letters survive in larger numbers than eighteenth, and often with enclosures. These enclosures, often loose sheets accompanying a letter to the secretary of the Admiralty, are not individually paginated or foliated. Readers will also find that some letters are not foliated either, especially before 1795, and are therefore cited by volume number, author (since the letters are clustered that way) and date.

INTRODUCTION

In the period covered by this volume, from 1739–1815, Britain was at war roughly two in every three years. The navy was crucial to its success. It defended the country from foreign invasion, kept vital lines of supply open to expanding theatres of war, and provided convoys for the commercial traffic that was Britain's bloodline. All this required a heavy outlay in crews and equipment. In 1739, at the beginning of the War of Jenkins' Ear, the number of seamen borne, that is actually registered on the ships' books, was 23,000. The demand for men was such that 85,000 sailors were borne at the peak of the Seven Years' War, rising to over 100,000 in the American War and 145,00 at the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815.¹ That is a six-fold increase in 75 years, a growth rate that greatly exceeded that of the merchant marine, which stood at 36,000 on the eve of the Seven Years War and just over 52,000 in 1793. This meant that the Royal Navy was constantly looking for new sources of seaworthy men as well as trying to balance its own needs against those of the merchant marine, whose traffic was essential to the country's prosperity and tax base.

The French answer to this sort of problem was conscription. In the early 1670s Colbert instituted an *inscription maritime* whereby all coastal areas had to provide lists of eligible men over 18 to serve in the Royal Navy. Over 150,000 were on the books by 1673, and the men were obliged to serve one year in every three or five in return for certain tax exemptions, pensions and fishing rights.² The British disliked this modern and arguably efficient system because it seemed too centralized, too despotic. It flouted the vaunted birthright of Englishmen to be free of government intervention. Consequently the British navy resorted to a system of impressing seaworthy people when volunteer sources of supply dried up, which they tended to do quite quickly, despite royal and civic bounties to sweeten recruitment. Impressment is an odd word. Essentially it meant to register, although it always carried with it the connotation of coercion. In Latin *imprestare* involved advancing money for a service, but *pressare* meant to weigh down or oppress. "What is pressing," asking the Duke of Richmond in a debate on manning the navy in 1779, "but a

¹ The most complete figures are to be found in N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean. A Naval History of Britain, 1649–1815* (New York and London, 2004), appendix VI.

² R. B. Byington, "The Forgotten Service: The French Navy of the Old Regime, 1650–1789," (MA thesis, Florida State University, 2011), 15–17; T. J. A. Le Goff, "Problèmes de recrutement de la marine française pendant la Guerre de Sept Ans", *Revue Historique*, 283 (1990), 205–33.

compulsory mode of obliging persons to take up arms, to become either soldiers or sailors.”³

Just how many men were coerced into serving in his Majesty’s Navy is frustratingly unclear. It is unclear because when men were picked up by press gangs in port, they may well have opted for volunteer status when they were actually regulated by the local captain. Three coastal workers from Chepstow did this when they embarked on the *United Brothers* tender in April 1805. [doc 431] Men might likely do this if the government offered a monetary inducement to enlist, a bounty as it was conventionally known. Such a sum, paid upfront, could help their families, who might not see them again for the duration of the war. Regulating officers sometimes went along with this practice to curb dangerous resentments in the press room, so precise numbers of those impressed are actually hard to come by. A survey of nearly 16,000 men recruited in England and Ireland at the height of the American war claimed nearly 44% of recruits were impressed. A further study in 1803–5 suggested over 48% of some 11,600 seamen were similarly coerced to serve.⁴ The corresponding figure for Bristol at the outset of the Napoleonic wars was 36 per cent, noticeably below the national average. Other figures for Bristol, really no more than snapshots, reveal that 29% of all seamen recruited for the Falkland Islands crisis in 1770 were impressed; and in the American war, in early 1777, some 41% of all experienced seamen who were sent around to Plymouth in the *Fanny* Tender were similarly regulated. [175, 189, 190] Adding landsmen would, of course, reduce the proportion of impressed men who entered.

Whether men entered voluntarily or not, Bristol was a prime site for naval recruitment during these years of on-going international war. At the onset of the War of Jenkins’ Ear in 1739, Bristol was the premier Atlantic port, combining a lucrative trade to the West Indies, Africa and America with long standing links to Ireland and north-western Europe. Although the city lost ground to Liverpool over the course of the eighteenth century, the growth of traffic to the port was steady. Tonnage to and from the West Indies, for example, more or less quadrupled during the century, with 25,000 tons of goods entering Bristol by 1790. By that time 70–80 ships were routinely engaged in bringing sugar, coffee and rum into the Avon, employing some 1500 seamen. Over 2800 merchant seamen actually signed articles at the port in this period, of which 87% gave Bristol as their place of residence.⁵ This meant that roughly 5% of Bristol’s population were merchant seamen in the late eighteenth century; in terms of the adult male population over 18 years of age, about 18 per cent. This was the cohort that the Royal Navy wanted to recruit into His Majesty’s fleets.

Indeed, the navy extended its reach even further, for the Admiralty’s definition of whom it deemed seaworthy was capacious. Press warrants talked of taking up seamen, seafaring men and “such persons, whose Occupations and Callings are to work in vessels and boats upon rivers.”⁶ This could include pilots, watermen, bargemen, trowmen, even shipwrights, for it was customary for them to make the odd voyage as a ship’s carpenter as well as work in the shipyards. All of these

³ *Cobbett’s Parliamentary History*, 20 (1779), 978.

⁴ William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor Michigan, Shelburne Papers, 139, no. 61; The National Archives, London, [hereafter TNA] Adm 1/581/86–89.

⁵ Jonathan Press, *The Merchant Seamen of Bristol, 1747–1789* (Bristol, 1976), 1; Walter Minchinton, “The Port of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century”, in ed. Patrick McGrath, *Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (Newton Abbot, 1972), 129–31.

⁶ TNA, Adm 1/1784 (John Fergusson) 19 July 1756; Adm 1/1611 (James Cunninghame) March 1778.

groups came under review as impressible cohorts in the eighteenth century, and their employers had sometimes to concede 10 per cent of their workforce to the navy to ensure that the rest would be protected from the press. By my calculations, perhaps a quarter of male Bristolians between the ages of 18 and 55 were vulnerable to recruitment into the navy, as well as a great many men who worked the lighters and barges of the Severn and routinely brought provisions and goods into Bristol. Young men who frequented quayside pubs and loitered on the quays had to keep a sharp eye out for the press gang, which might well pick them up as potential recruits for the navy. These men would be taken to the press gang's headquarters or rendezvous, where they were thrown into a lockup to await examination by the regulating officer and his surgeon. If they were deemed "stout men, fit for His Majesty's service", they would be rated according to their status and sea experience, and then taken down river to Broad Pill, or King Road off Portishead Point, where they would embark on a tender which would eventually transport them to Plymouth. There recruits would be assigned to a ship in the fleet.

The documents in this collection address the problems and challenges of manning the navy in Bristol during a 75 year period, the classic age of eighteenth-century warfare in the age of sail. The collection is by no means exhaustive. I have included few letters from the Admiralty Board, whose volumes number over 200 for this period. I have ignored the muster and log-books of the tenders, important for capturing the realities of sailing to Plymouth, the time spent awaiting recruits in Broad Pill and King Road, and the potential health hazards of stowing men in insalubrious holds for long periods of time. I have chosen instead to concentrate on the letters of the regulating captains in Bristol, who routinely wrote to the Admiralty Board, or more accurately to their secretaries, about the actual day-to-day or week-to-week problems of recruitment. I have also been attentive to what was scribbled in the margins of the letters by the secretaries and their scribes, because these reveal London's response to provincial predicaments or to questions of how to handle specific cases. These documents, stored at the National Archives at Kew, form the backbone of the collection. They are undoubtedly the richest source for understanding the dynamics of recruitment, the interplay between the naval and civic authorities about recruitment, the evasion and resistance to recruitment, and the efforts of ordinary people to extricate their kin from the navy on grounds of justice or compassion. In effect, they throw a lot of light on how maritime populations encountered and negotiated one of the more intrusive arms of the eighteenth-century state.

Five other sources form part of this collection. Three of them, the letters of the Admiralty Solicitor, the Admiralty law reports, and the newspapers, address the the legality and violence of impressment, for protests against impressment were not without casualties. Throughout the eighteenth century there were complaints that impressment was a violation of Magna Carta and the Englishman's birthright to be free of government oppression. Clause 39 of the Great Charter decreed that "No free man [freeman] shall be arrested or [and] imprisoned or disseised [dispossessed] or exiled or in any way victimized, neither will we attack him or send anyone to attack him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers or [and] by the law of the land."⁷

⁷ For the original Latin, see William Stubbs, *Select Charters* (Oxford, 1880), 300; for a translation, see *English Historical Documents III, 1189–1327* (London, 1975), 320. The brackets reveal there was room for interpretation, on account of the fact that "liber homo" could mean free man or the more juridical freeman, and that "vel" could mean either "or" or "and."

Protests against impressment had been voiced by Levellers in the mid-seventeenth century and resurfaced again after 1688 when it was commonly believed that the prerogative powers on which impressment had been based had been irrevocably contained if not nullified. An important test case about the legality of impressment occurred in Bristol in 1743, when a seaman from the *Bremen Factor*, Alexander Broadfoot, killed a press ganger who had boarded his ship and had attempted to take him. [30] This incident came hard upon another confrontation, this time in King Road, where the Lieutenant, James Roots, and one of his gang, had been successfully prosecuted for using excessive force in bringing a boat to, firing upon two seamen and crippling one of them. [26–29] These events raised the question of how much violence could be used by gangs when impressing seamen, and by extension, whether resistance to gang violence or irregular impressment was justified. In the Broadfoot case, the coroner's jury found him guilty of murder, but at trial the sentence was reduced to manslaughter on the advice of the Bristol Recorder, Michael Foster, who observed that the press gang had boarded the *Bremen Factor* inappropriately, without the presence of an officer and strictly against the terms of the press warrant. [31]

At the same time Foster vindicated the legality of impressment, insisting it was “a prerogative inherent in the Crown, grounded upon common law, and recognized by many Acts of Parliament.”⁸ Framed in this braided manner, the constitutionality of impressment became very difficult to challenge, although people certainly tried. Granville Sharp probed the legality of impressment in his broader investigations about English liberty, which led him also to question the legality of slavery in Britain. He was particularly troubled by the legal argument that military service could be demanded of anyone out of state necessity, and of seamen, in particular: “a Doctrine without bounds when once admitted, for it insensibly declines to every evil, like a High Road to Hell.”⁹ London radicals followed suit, using a number of test cases involving London freemen to try to chip away at the constitutionality of impressment; but without success.¹⁰ All that could be achieved from Mr. Foster's judgment was a recognition that impressment, while legal, had to be conducted with due process. That meant executing press warrants in the appropriate manner, complying with the civil authorities over house searches and the delivery of debtors, observing the statutory exemptions to impressment, which included certain categories of whalers in the high season, sea apprentices in their first three years, masters and first mates on shipping vessels. Seafarers could be impressed, but not all seafarers, all of the time. Much of the daily business of the regulating captains and their lieutenants involved sorting out these complexities and making sure their gangs stayed on the right side of the civil authorities, whose officiousness could stall recruitment. Public reminders that impressment had to be conducted legally, such as a reprinting of the Broadfoot case in 1770, [31] alerted recruiting captains to the fact that that the public could be vigilant as well.

My two remaining sources involve records from Bristol itself, those of the Society of Merchant Venturers and the Bristol Corporation. Both were closed, elite institutions with overlapping memberships and a strong investment in overseas trade. When the recruiting officer Thomas Gordon fell out with James Laroche for

⁸ Nicholas Rogers, *The Press Gang. Naval impressment and its opponents in Georgian London* (London, 2007), 18–21. See *Rex v Broadfoot*, 2 Salk 31, *English Reports* 168, 78.

⁹ Gloucestershire Record Office, Granville Sharp Papers, D 3549 Box 3824, 13/3/36–7.

¹⁰ John A. Woods, “The City of London and Impressment, 1776–1777”, *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, 7 (1956–59), 122–25.

impressing his mate in the slaver *Prince Tom*, [131] he was dealing with a man who had been mayor of Bristol in 1750 and master of the Merchant Venturers the following year. The interest of these two bodies in naval recruiting drives was intense and significant. They helped boost enlistment by supplementing the royal bounty to volunteers. In this way they tried to persuade mobile or straggling sailors to join up, while holding back their own key seamen, either through the purchase of protections from the Admiralty, or by having them land on the north coast of Somerset before they reached Kings Road, a source of continual complaint among recruiting captains, who realized that many men were eluding them in this manner. Bristol merchants had no wish to appear hostile to impressment, but they were also interested in social peace within the city and the welfare of their own crews. They were prepared to back press warrants, but they preferred to see them rigorously exercised at King Road rather than Broad Quay and the Back, where protests were likely to have a greater impact of their own businesses and their reputations.

Certainly, the Bristol merchants did not want their own commerce unduly disrupted by the manning imperatives of the fleet and they could become tetchy if press gangs impinged on their protected seamen or interfered with the traffic of the river by antagonizing pilots, for example. At the same time they were fully aware that it was the Admiralty which was ultimately responsible for the safe convoy of their shipping in wartime, and so they tried to maintain good relations with the naval authorities, even to the point of providing two ships and crews to help convoy vessels in 1756, when naval power was stretched to meet the challenge of the French. [98, 99, 101] Consequently struggles over impressment seldom resolved themselves into a polarity between Admiralty and port. That could happen in smaller ports like Poole or Whitby, where the social distance between men and masters was smaller. But in Bristol, where overseas traffic was vulnerable to attack from enemy privateers venturing up the coast from the Bristol Channel, the greater merchants were interested in keeping on the right side of the Admiralty while protecting their key crewmen from naval incursions. Conflicts over recruitment in Bristol tended to be triangulated rather than dyadic, with the navy, the city elite and the main body of seamen constituting the critical nodes of activity; in effect, a state – capital – labour configuration.¹¹

The formation of the impress service, as it later became known, happened slowly over several wars. The captains' letters in the Admiralty 1 series allow us to track this development in some detail. During the wars of the 1740s the Admiralty lacked a permanent recruiting centre in the city. The initial impressment of 1739 was performed by the city authorities themselves, who kept potential recruits in the Bridewell, before turning them over to the navy. [1] The main recruiting took place down river, at King Road, where Captain Fytche of the *Ruby* distributed the recruits to various passing ships and organized a tender to sail off Ilfracombe and Lundy. It was a fledgling operation, and Fytche found himself unduly stretched when asked to command a convoy of the Bristol trade; a convoy, he later reflected, that might well have been requested simply to remove the only man of war that could impress the homecoming fleets from America and the Caribbean. [25]

Most of the impressment conducted in the 1740s was offshore, from homecoming vessels. This was true everywhere. This standard procedure changed during the Seven Years' War, when the Admiralty made the first substantial attempt to establish

¹¹ See Rogers, *Press Gang*, 59–80.

rendezvous in the provincial ports.¹² One was opened in Bristol under Captain Samuel Graves in February 1756, but conflicts of command soon appeared between Graves and the captain of the tender at King Road, John Evans. Those conflicts remained unresolved before Graves' departure; prompted, perhaps, by a lengthy prosecution of his lieutenant for assault and trespass by Thomas Dennison, a Bristol publican. [69–72]. The result was that while impressment continued at the mouth of the Avon, the centre of town was ignored. It consequently became a haven for seamen, with as many as 2000 seamen lingering in port and defying the press gangs to pick them up. [81] Captain Thomas Gordon discovered this to his cost when he attempted to re-establish a rendezvous in Bristol in 1759. On the day he beat up for volunteers, he reported, “upwards of three hundred Seamen gathered in a riotous manner, almost killed a person who they thought belonged to us” and threatened “Death and Destruction of the officers, searching for them everywhere.” [99] The confrontations between the press gang and the seamen were so violent that the Bristol corporation was reluctant to back press warrants without military aid. Gordon's gangs were continually roughed up and one notorious ganger, an ex-prize fighter by the name of Cornelius Harris, was captured and tortured to death by sailors at Long Ashton. [114–116] By June 1759, Gordon dolefully reported, everyone in his gangs had been wounded in some manner and “the Duty cannot be carried on in this large and Populous City where we have everything to contend with.” [123] Early in 1760 the City council advised the Admiralty to abandon the post and only impress at King Road from homecoming vessels. This it did. Henceforth Gordon devoted his energies to recruiting men from King Road, although not without difficulty. His gangs endured volleys of fire from homecoming vessels and could only board vessels “sword in hand”, that is, by threatening aggressive action. [149, 152]

During the American war the impress service was established on a more permanent basis, with the regulating officer in Bristol responsible for recruiting in the city and at King Road. The officer in charge, Captain William Hamilton, had served briefly at the end of the Seven Years' War and seems to have established a rapport with the city authorities, [273] even though the city merchants were quite divided over the war, with the pro-Americans not especially enthusiastic about boosting naval enlistment.¹³ The only serious mistake Hamilton made was in impressing an old, pro-American sea captain named James Caton at the Exchange in July 1779, an action that was considered to be mean-spirited, if not malicious. Caton was quickly released through the auspices of the Bristol MP, Edmund Burke, and the city Recorder, John Dunning, both well-known opposition spokesmen against the war, and Hamilton subsequently faced steep legal fees when Caton sought redress through the courts. This well-publicized incident [244–246] drew the Admiralty's ire, and their Lordships kept Hamilton hanging as to whether they would reimburse his expenses, which amounted to over £350. [261, 266]

Hamilton's recruiting drives were not always smooth. There were eight episodes of violent resistance to impressment in Bristol during the American war: they included a mutiny on the press tender in King road in which over forty men escaped; and an affray at the Boar's Head, Redcliff Hill, in which the press gang leader was fatally wounded and another had his ear cut off. [235, 275] Yet in the end a fair number of men were sent to Plymouth. In the extraordinary press of the summer of 1779,

¹² Stephen F. Gradish, *the Manning of the British Navy during the Seven Years' War* (London, 1980).

¹³ Peter Marshall, *Bristol and the American War of Independence* (Bristol, 1977), 17–23.

when all men, whether protected or not, were taken up to prepare for a possible invasion from France, Bristol delivered more recruits than Liverpool, Newcastle, Hull and Yarmouth, and quite astonishingly in this instance, London itself. [255] In the months that followed, Bristol was routinely sending 180 or so recruits a month to the Plymouth station. [256, 260] Nonetheless, the same problems confronted Hamilton as his predecessors and successors. He could not prevent the landing of men on the Somerset coast before they reached King Road, or even the practice of disembarking men on the Holmes, from where they would later be smuggled to the shore.¹⁴ He could not discipline the pilots, so necessary to the safety of traffic on the Avon, who were facilitating the landings from their skiffs and yawls. He had to tolerate violent confrontations every time the large Atlantic fleets descended on King road in such numbers as to overwhelm the press gangs in the tenders. He balked at the fact that there were hundreds of coastal workers who were exempted from the press because they delivered essential supplies to the city. Some of these small boats, as his successors realized, were sheltering seamen from the royal navy while they looked for a more profitable berth in the merchant marine. It was violent resistance to the gangs that caught the public eye, for it was frequently represented in the newspaper press during the American war, especially in the more radically inclined journals and weeklies. Less visible, but arguably more important, were the evasive tactics of many seamen, abetted no doubt by merchants who were keen to retain key workers in their crews.

Islands, coastal coves and the coastal traffic itself offered spaces for evading the press. Equally important were the parliamentary exemptions to impressment. They had been conceded because it was widely recognized that the royal and merchant marines were interdependent. The navy protected the seas for commerce, and the merchant marine was a nursery for the navy. The equilibrium between the two was lost if the navy recruited so aggressively as to impair the development of seafaring skills and remove key seamen from their duties; and so it was legislated that sea apprentices were immune from the press during their first three years of service, that masters, mates, boatswains and carpenters were exempt from impressment on all vessels over 50 tons. So, too, were certain categories of whalers, such as skilled harpooners and linesmen, and from 1729, four men on a fishing vessel: the master, his apprentice, one seaman and one landsman. To these statutory protections came others issued by the Admiralty, the Ordnance, the Customs and Excise. In all nearly 50,000 people were annually immune to impressment during the Seven Years' War.¹⁵

These exemptions and entitlements proved a rich field for the eighteenth-century equivalent of "draft-dodging." Press-gang officers were constantly troubled by the dubious status of apprentices, either because they suspected they had been to sea before or because they were clearly too old to be genuine. [220, 231] They also became increasingly exercised by the fact that the masters and mates of incoming ships did not always match those listed in the register. [522] Or that protected seafarers did not correspond to the descriptions on their documents; which specified age, height, hair colour, eye colour, build, and sometimes distinguishing marks such as scars or even tattoos. [451] Naval officers also disliked handing over impressed seamen to the civil power because those men purportedly had incurred debts of over £20. A 1758 statute entitled sheriffs to arrest seamen for such debts if creditors

¹⁴ On this practice see J. R. Hutchinson, *The Press Gang Afloat and Ashore* (London, 1913), 70–71.

¹⁵ Rogers, *Press Gang*, 30; Hutchinson, *Press Gang Afloat*, 85–87.

so demanded, but the practice was often felt to be open to abuse. Captain Thomas Hawker reported in August 1801 that “every able and ordinary seamen that we have impressed” had been “immediately arrested [for debt] by the Sheriff’s Officers, both from the *Rendezvous* and with the *Silver Oar* from the *Tenders*.” Indeed, the Admiralty Solicitor, Charles Bricknell, believed that arrests for fictitious debts had become such a troublesome problem that it necessitated new legislation to ensure that seamen were returned to the navy when their debts were paid off. [370, 375]

These issues consumed a large amount of a regulating officer’s time and they tell us something about the information complex of the eighteenth-century state, which combined details from parish registers and sworn affidavits from employers, churchwardens, magistrates, kin and friends, with the sort of documentation available to the Admiralty: muster entries, protection descriptions, certificates of leave. Although oral, local knowledge was often critical in determining a seaman’s status, paper trails were important. Thomas Hawker was not entirely sure whether Matthew Pike, impressed on board the *Union* tender in November 1793, had found a substitute; yet three years later he assured the Admiralty that “the Books must prove it.” [304] Predictably press-gang officers distrusted the some of the information presented to them. Captain Man Dobson, for example, complained bitterly about the protection of Evan Francis, which he clearly thought was fraudulent, and the so-called apprenticeship of William Hughes, who had also been impressed. Hughes’ case would show, he assured John Barrow at the Admiralty, “how little dependence is to be placed in affidavits made by that class of people in that part of the Empire” [Did he mean Wales here?] “Indeed, instances offer daily...the want of morality in that respect.” [581]

The knowledge available to press-gang officers in a pre-census, pre-civil registration age was rudimentary, time-consuming to collect or verify, and it often frustrated the officers who had to make quick decisions about the eligibility of seamen for the navy. The problems were particularly acute when it came to American seamen. By law Britons were not supposed to impress foreign nationals, and in many cases it was possible to distinguish them from British or Irish-born seamen because of the way they spoke and acted. For American seamen this was a lot more difficult, and the difficulties increased because the Americans had a liberal naturalization policy after Independence. The first law of 1790 required only two years’ residence, and while this was increased to 14 years in 1798, it was reduced to five in 1802.¹⁶ High wages in the American marine induced many British seamen to sign on to American-owned ships, and over time many took out American nationality and acquired certification from notaries or consuls, even customs officers, to protect them from British impressment. This proved a problem for the British because they adhered to a policy of indelible allegiance. Seamen born and bred in Britain were British, period. So, too, were those born in the British empire. And if an American happened to be married in the British Isles, he was fair game for the British navy as well. A list of 1042 American seamen impressed into the British navy during the period April 1809 to September 1810 reveals that 641 [62%] were detained: 107 [10%] because they had no documentation; 105 [10%] because they had fraudulent protections; 229 [22%] because they were born in the British isles; and 21 [2%] because they were married there.¹⁷

¹⁶ James F. Zimmerman, *Impressment of American Seamen* (Port Washington, NY, 1925), 22–23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 264

With as many as 10,000 American seamen impressed during the period 1793–1815, it was entirely predictably that the issue of citizenship would surface in the Bristol records. Captain Thomas Hawker was prepared to discharge Americans who carried what he regarded as appropriate documentation, [307, 331, 335] but he told the Admiralty in November 1796 that he only regarded consul-endorsed protections as valid, not ones that came from public notaries or magistrates. [314] Even then he could be sceptical, as he was with Isaac Smith, who had an attestation from the American consul in Bristol, but seemingly went under a series of alibis when he was picked up in Saint-Domingue. [308] Hawker rejected the discharge of Simon Burns, a 33-year old Irishman, who had a certificate from a public notary in Baltimore testifying that he had lived and worked in America before Independence and “has ever since continued a Citizen of the United States of America.” [335–336] In his view Burn’s birthplace qualified him for the British navy. His successor, George Barker, impressed Thomas Jones because he was married to a Bristol woman with two children, and Cato Martin, a black seaman taken from a West Indianman whose American protection was for a white sailor. [382, 385] Barker also rejected the request of Francis Metcalfe to be released from the British navy on the grounds that he had American citizenship and for years had worked to and from New York. The American consul in Bristol, Mr. Vanderhorst, backed Metcalfe up, as did Sir John Durbin, one of the aldermen, but Barker reported that Metcalfe, the chief mate of an American vessel, had married in Bristol in 1797, some nine years earlier, and that his wife moved back and forth between the ports of Liverpool and Bristol to live with him. [447]

The reports on American seamen reveal interesting details about the mobility of trans-Atlantic seamen. William Castle, for example, was the carpenter on board a Dutch West Indianman at the beginning of the war in 1793, and was taken captive by a Liverpool privateer, for whom he did some repair work. He was advised by the captain to work his passage back to New York, presumably to escape the clutches of the British navy, and once there he moved up the coast to the Maritimes, where he married a Canadian. In 1805 “he thought proper to Go[ne] Home with my wife and family to Rotterdam in Holland for to see my parents,” an interesting comment in view of the fact that his wife alleged he was born in America and served his apprenticeship there. [452] Was Castle American? Was he Dutch? Was he Dutch-American, with ties of kinship to both countries? As far as the Admiralty was concerned, all this was incidental to the fact that he had married a British subject, was picked up in Bristol en route to the Netherlands, and was liable to be pressed.

The search for American sailors with British connections was intense, because the navy was desperately searching for men in the French wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the numbers borne topped 125,000 before 1803 and over 140,000 after 1809. The magnitude of the manning problem was evident in 1795, when parliament passed an Act allowing the navy to recruit inland by establishing quotas for every seaport and county. It was intensified by the fact that by 1803 the Royal Navy was also in competition for men with various other forces designed to meet the threat of invasion: volunteer regiments, the militia, the supplementary militia. This entangled naval recruiters into negotiating for seamen who had entered other forces to evade the press, men such as Edmund Maddox, who had seen service in the navy in 1801 but three years later was lying low in Cranham, Gloucestershire, where he worked in a pottery and had enrolled in the volunteers. [395] And it led

regulating officers to defy local feelings and affiliations if their prey was seaworthy. Such was the case with Thomas Tuck, a bargemen in the local militia in Devizes, whom Captain Philips impressed because he worked the river, despite efforts from his commanding officer to retrieve him. [520] These conflicts could be acrimonious, because on balance the large-scale mobilizations at the turn of the century made it harder for the Admiralty to recruit men. Many coastal workers successfully eluded the gangs by enrolling in the Sea Fencibles, the sea-borne volunteer force who were exempt from impressment.¹⁸ The Pill pilots, for example, perennially a thorn in the side of press-gang officers, joined the Fencibles in very large numbers. 250 [63%] were so registered out of a possible pool of 400, making Pill a virtual oasis from impressment during the Napoleonic wars. [477, 566]

The search for men broached new areas during this era. In 1798 the Admiralty turned down the request of a French émigré to join the navy, declaring that it was averse to recruiting Frenchmen “of any description.” [332] Yet by 1807 the Admiralty Board was prepared to admit into the navy francophone blacks who were being held in Stapleton jail and wanted to volunteer.¹⁹ [484, 486, 545] Precisely why these black sailors wanted to join the British fleet is unclear. Perhaps they were troubled by the reintroduction of slavery in the French colonies after a period of militant liberation in the Caribbean in which thousands of slaves took up arms against the British; perhaps they feared their eventual release into French custody might lead to their re-enslavement. Perhaps the racial tensions between free blacks and white francophone seamen, evident at Saint-Domingue, had resurfaced at Stapleton.²⁰ Whatever the reason, these blacks were prepared to fight for the British, and the willingness of the Admiralty to take them revealed the extent to which its definition of Frenchness was racially and geographically defined, for white francophones from New Orleans and Newfoundland were accepted into the British navy as well.

The Admiralty made a concerted effort to retain British-born Americans and it tolerated francophone blacks, but in its quest for men in the West Country in particular, it ventured into areas that had hitherto been more or less off-limits to the press gangs. Trowmen had customarily been given protections from the press, and had been able to rely on the city authorities to back them, yet by 1806 the Admiralty was demanding that 10% of their men be handed over to the navy in return for the protection of the rest. [450, 452] The watermen who assisted the pilots also came under the spotlight, as did shipwrights, many of who worked periodically as ship’s carpenters. [566, 575] These incursions into hitherto protected occupations were resisted. When Captain John Philips impressed a shipwright early in his tenure at Bristol, 500 to 600 shipwrights descended upon the rendezvous and demanded him back. “As we were but fifteen in number,” Philips dolefully reported, “I was much against my inclination oblig’d to give the man up.” [515]

The interventionist policies of the Admiralty were unpopular, not only with the populace, but with merchants, dealers and ship-builders. [593] In August 1813, Captain Man Dobson reported that “the Corporation and Merchants of Bristol will not do anything towards raising men for His Majesty’s Navy but what they are

¹⁸ Nicholas Rogers, “The Sea Fencibles, Loyalism and the Reach of the State,” in *Resisting Napoleon. The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797–1815*, ed. Mark Philp (Aldershot, 2006), 41–60.

¹⁹ Dorothy Vintner, “Prisoners of War in Stapleton jail, near Bristol”, *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 75 (1956), 136–70.

²⁰ Jeremy D. Popkin, “Sailors and Revolution: Naval Mutineers in Saint-Domingue, 1790–1793”, *French History*, 26/4 (2012), 460–81.

obliged to do,” a significant departure from their former stance towards manning. Several months later Dobson reported that “The Corporation is very much dissatisfied at the Quota for Pill Watermen” and not at all happy about the one imposed on the tow owners. “Indeed,” he concluded, “the raising of Men at this port having been nearly lost, all persons concerned feel the alteration so much the more.” [576, 596]

Confronted with declining enrolment, the impress service in Bristol, became hard-nosed in its application of the rules. Masters were forced to show that apprentices had no prior sea experience; mates were impressed if they ventured from their boats, even to supervise the unloading of cargoes on the quays. [461, 480, 529] Old seamen were taken up; one, William Lawton, aged 55 with a wife and five children, had already served 10 years and had been previously discharged at the Peace of Amiens. If he were retained until the end of the war, it would mean another 7 years’ service. [470] Runaway apprentices were not necessarily returned to their masters if they volunteered, a reversal of earlier policies. Men were entered who were dubiously fit to serve. A 22 year-old lad, who had fallen off a building and fractured his skull, was found to be a “stout healthy young man” by the surgeon at the rendezvous. [597] A cooper with a cataract in one eye, who had been rejected by the militia, was recruited into the navy as well. [572] Where the Admiralty felt there were extenuating circumstances in an application for releasing a young man from the navy, the bar for liberation was often set high. In days when men routinely bought themselves out of service by finding substitutes, the Admiralty started asking for double substitutions and buy-outs as high as £80. A topmast man in a collier or coal-ship, caught without a protection, had to find £66 to be released from the navy, an enormous sum for a man of that social class. [562]

During the Napoleonic wars, Bristol recruitment stalled relative to other ports. In a survey drawn up by Rear-Admiral Arthur Phillip, it was estimated that Bristol entered about 65 men per month between May 1803 and January 1805, at a cost of just over £3 per recruit. This was equivalent to the recruiting patterns in Hull and Swansea, but poor relative to Liverpool, Leith and the Tyne, where the number of men recruited was 2–3 times as high at half to two-thirds of the cost. Liverpool was the most successful, averaging 220 men per month at a cost of little more than £1 per man.²¹ So by 1805 Bristol recruitment was falling behind the return of the larger northern ports. Within five years, it was seriously faltering, so badly that the regulating captain, George Barker, was replaced in July 1810. Yet his successor, John Philips, brought in to pump up the numbers, proved only marginally more successful. In 1811 Philips raised about 320 men, with an average of 20–30 per month in May to December, when the homecoming fleets returned. [524] In 1812, Philips and his men raised a mere 237 recruits, of which over a third were boys; some of them street urchins from Bath, delivered by magistrates who hoped to cut back on petty theft and pilfering during a period of high prices, falling wages and a decline in formal apprenticeships.²² [509, 544] With falling recruitment, the Admiralty became increasingly troubled by the expense of the *Enchantress* tender. With 35 men to sail the boat and guard recruits, its expenditure was £3000 per annum. [524] Recruiting, moreover, was carried on lethargically. The officers of the *Enchantress* lived on shore, not on the tender. The only exception was the assistant surgeon. [561] And

²¹ TNA, Adm 1/581 ff. 86–89.

²² R. S. Neale, *Bath. A Social History 1650–1850* (London, 1981), ch. 3.

there were troubling signs of small-scale venality with respect to beer and spirits. [607]

One of the most interesting aspects of this period of naval recruitment in Bristol is the high volume of letters from parents, wives, employers and friends attempting to get young men out of the navy. Whether this is a product of better record-keeping, or of documentary survival, it is impossible to say. But the letters do offer some interesting insights into the reasons why some young men joined up, however recklessly. Two apprentices, Robert Hicks and Robert Munday, bored with their work at a time when trade was slack, told the lieutenant they “wanted to see the world”, a Crusoe-like impulse they later regretted. [312] Several shop mates joined up in a state of intoxication, although in the case of John Adams, a 24 year-old plasterer, married with two children, the navy may have been a way of avoiding familial responsibilities. [405] Two mischievous boys, aged 11 and 13, were taken up for throwing stones at boats on the river, apparently at the behest of a neighbour who had a grudge against their mother. Two others, sons of a quarryman, were taken before a local JP for playing during divine service, and were so terrified by the prospect of prison or other dire punishments, that they joined up in a panic. [429, 504] Squabbles with parents or masters led others to enlist; in the case of orphan Richard Bland, it seems that he did not like the legal career his uncle had mapped out for him. [498]

A handful of letters, then, tell us how family quarrels, pranks and hard drinking could propel men into the navy. Yet quite a few letters are devoted to liberating men from the service. They come from wives, parents, friends and patrons who appealed to the Admiralty’s sense of compassion, fairness, and sometimes patriotism to extricate deserving men from serving the navy. It is not easy to judge the truthfulness of the claims made or the stories told, but the letters are important for how, and on what grounds, the claims are made. A few letters demand the return of men on grounds of law. In seeking to liberate a line-manager of the *Aurora* whaler, a solicitor to the owner cites chapter and verse to show why the impressment is illegal, and heavily hints at court action if the demand is not met. [482] Very few letters adopt this tone. Most are more deferential. Some cite the contribution of the family to the war effort. Edward White, a 22-year-old able seaman, stressed that his brother-in-law lost an arm at Trafalgar, and that he was now the only support of an aging mother and his sister’s family, for his brother-in-law’s pension of £8 pa was insufficient to sustain them. [469] Others pleaded that the loss of an important breadwinner would pauperize the family, or at the very least reduce them to dire straits, especially where the wife was either pregnant or burdened with young children. These claims are sometimes endorsed by churchwardens; both to stress the veracity of the claim and its respectability. [489, 497] In the case of John Pearce, a mason from Monkton Combe, who in a fit of despondency entered the navy, the churchwardens said it would be better “for the country as well as the unfortunate family of the Individual” if he were released, and even offered to find a substitute. [491]

Who one was able to mobilize on one’s behalf was, of course, important in an age when patron–client relations mattered a good deal. When an apprentice factor who had worked in London and St Petersburg recklessly entered the navy, his father, a Stapleton mill-owner, had Charles Joseph Harford, JP, of Stapleton Grove, write on his behalf. [508] Others tried to have mayors, aldermen, or the minister and prestigious members of the Clifton Academy back their application. [525] Perhaps

the most interesting case involved Edwin Garraway. This nineteen year-old, a popular waiter and “busboy” at the Rownham Ferry, was impressed into the navy despite his poor eyes and dubious sea experience. The inhabitants of Abbots Leigh petitioned for his release; so, too, did the MP Richard Hart Davis; but it was not until the Duke of Beaufort wrote on his behalf that his case was reconsidered. [517]

What it took to get a man out of the navy, how claims were assessed in terms of legal entitlement, class, justice and discretion, is something readers might like to ponder. They might also like to consider whether the higher incidence of petitioning during the Napoleonic wars reflected a begrudging, but growing acknowledgment of impressment’s legitimacy, or a deepening knowledge of how the navy operated, and what claims might temper its rules and judgments. Certainly there does seem to be some correlation between the decline of anti-impressment riots and the rise of petitioning, and it is noteworthy that towards the end of the Napoleonic war, regulating officers were complaining about attorneys who specialized in dealing with seamen’s grievances. In 1813 Lieutenant Cornwall singled out one John Cranidge, a school-teacher “notorious for his violent democrattick principals”, a supporter of the radical Henry Hunt, who often handled impressment cases for seamen. In this instance Cranidge was trying to get the black American, John Randall, out of the navy, although the Admiralty was determined to keep him on the grounds that he was married to the British woman living in Bristol. [574]

Did the existence of people like Cranidge imply new strategies of resistance towards impressment? Did it reveal a richer repertoire of engagement, combining direct action interventions with legal contention and complaint? After all, there is no sign that mobbing disappeared from the popular repertoire. At the resumption of the war in 1803 there was a bitter protest against impressment at Rownham Ferry in which marines lost their nerve and fired on the crowd. Subsequent efforts to bring in straggling seamen from Bath and Shepton Mallet also met with violent resistance. [376–378, 383–384] The threat of physical resistance to impressment was ever present, at the rendezvous, and in the street, even though it was deployed more discriminately in the nineteenth century than it had been earlier. [516, 519] In January 1814, a lieutenant and his ganger were swarmed in the streets when they attempted to take up a straggling seaman, and when challenged on what authority they did this, the crowd spirited the man away. Prominent among the ringleaders was the master of a Minehead sloop, Henry Forrest, and a well-known local ironmonger by the name of Richard Hunt. He was the man who cried out to Lieutenant Pitman “You damned rascal, shew your authority, what right have you with this Man.” [593] The impress service retaliated by trying to impress Forrest, on the grounds that he was irregularly registered as master of his vessel, but it also wanted to nail Hunt. Captain Dobson told the Admiralty that if no notice were taken of his intervention, it “would destroy the service of raising Men at this place.” [592–594]

“A ship is worse than a gaol,” remarked Dr. Johnson. “There is, in a gaol, better air, better company, better conveniency of every kind; and a ship has the additional disadvantage of being in danger.”²³ His statement is one of those quirky aphorisms that contains an element of truth. Naval service was sometimes seen as prison-like, and angry masters were not above using the sea service to discipline troublesome apprentices. [214] The master of George Watkins attempted to do this, saying that

²³ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, intro. Pat Rogers (Oxford, 1980), 688

“he wish’d to punish him by confinement”; a strategy that did not endear the master to the press-gang officers, who disliked their role as temporary jailers, and refused to release the lad when he finally came to claim him. [554] Such a man was not alone in attempting to exploit the impress service for ulterior ends. The captain of a Cornish brig, at odds with his mate over his wages for the delivery of some pilchards to the Mediterranean, had him impressed on the return journey. The owner of a Severn fishery similarly sought to discipline a worker by having him impressed. [400, 604] By contrast, journeymen coopers, locked in a dispute with their employers in 1795, informed on a blackleg who refused to join their combination and had him impressed into the navy. He remained there until 1803, having seen service in the West Indies and Nova Scotia. He was discharged, so he said, in “a very indifferent state of health.”[490]

Local inhabitants and magistrates occasionally used the navy to rid themselves of troublesome men. A magistrate from Minchinhampton reported that a seaman named Edward Drake, a “dangerous & malicious” character who had been three years before the mast, was residing at Bourne near Stroud. He wondered whether the impress service would like to pick him up. [443] In this instance, the Admiralty was not interested, although press-gang officers did sometimes allow petty convicts to plea bargain their way into the navy, and they paid off the debts of seamen who were prepared to volunteer to get out of jail. The navy was nonetheless reasonably careful of who it might take, partly because jail-birds might have some form of typhus fever, something that seriously endangered the fleet during the Cartagena expedition of 1741. Minor ailments were ignored, for all manner of recruits. In 1795, when the Admiralty was struggling to meet its quotas, the acting surgeon in Bristol believed that volunteers with minor venereal complaints should be allowed to enter the navy on the grounds that the ships’ surgeons knew how to handle the problem. In his opinion, “most seamen” suffered from such ailments “in some degree or another.” [281]

The health of seamen crops up in this set of documents in various guises; in discussion about the quality of recruits, in petitions for release. There is, in fact, a lot of incidental evidence in these records about the occupational hazards of working ships in the age of sail. Perhaps the one place where the issue of hygiene really hits home is in the actual entry of seamen to the service. Both impressed men and volunteers were treated little better than vagrants on their induction to the navy. They were held in city lock-ups or the holds of tenders, which transported them to the fleets. At the rendezvous in Bristol, there were no washing facilities. Captain Caton was appalled by the room where he was incarcerated, where the chimney place served as a common latrine. [246] At Broad Pill or King Road, where the Bristol-based tenders were moored, the men were guarded in prison-like conditions by crews and marines, some of whom appear to be hardened veterans, born outside the West Country, hailing as far afield as Ireland, Scotland, Poland, and even Austria. [609] Battered down under the hatches, new recruits were often crowded together in fetid, noisome conditions. William Robinson recalled the pitiful conditions of a Thames-side tender where some were “sea-sick, some retching, others...smoking, whilst many were so overcome with the stench that they fainted for want of air.” When the men finally emerged from the hold, he remembered, “a wretched appearance we cut, for scarcely any of us were free from filth and vermin.”²⁴

²⁴ William Robinson, *Jack Nastyface: Memoirs of a Seaman* (1836; reprinted London, 1973), 25–28.

The situation in Bristol en route to Plymouth might even have been worse, for storms and strong westerlies sometimes kept the tenders in Kings Road for weeks at a time and aggravated the chances of disease in the congested holds. In 1759, for example, James Gaborian reported that he had “several Men down with High Fevers, and as we are much crouded with Men, [I] am fearful it may be communicated through the Vessel.” [134] Another fever broke out in 1801, and from the complaints about the poor quality of men when they arrived in Plymouth, one suspects there were others that went unreported. [364]

Enlistment into the Royal Navy must have been a shock to the system to many newcomers; harsh and humiliating. It is not surprising that many young men had second thoughts by the time they were holed up in the tenders. [501, 508] Admiral Phillip recommended that volunteers should be taken overland from Bristol to Plymouth.²⁵ He wanted to separate them from the impressed men, if only to enable the crews and marines on the tenders handle a smaller, hostile force. The wear and tear of handling that fractious force on a day-to-day basis could be considerable. A few lieutenants succumbed to drink. [240, 406] Press gangsters deserted. Of the 21 members of the 12-strong gang on the *Britannia* in 1794, two deserted, Thomas Kirby in March, Dan Prest in November. And the frequent turnover of men on the tender meant there was little esprit de corps.²⁶

Impressment underscored a central contradiction of the eighteenth-century navy. In the land of liberty a substantial portion of naval crews were not themselves free, even though Britain’s wooden walls were cherished as a bulwark of freedom. Once in the navy, a seaman was bonded to the state for his working life, for few survived the rigours of riding the waves after 55 years of age. It is little wonder that impressment was bitterly resented by mariners. Only those who wanted to use the navy as escape from domestic predicaments or responsibilities would have tolerated it, and most of these men, one suspects, would have volunteered. Impressment cut sailors off from their families for years at a time, for the navy routinely turned crews over to other vessels when ships docked for repairs and cleaning, for fear they would desert. Pay in the Royal Navy, moreover, was dismal compared to the supply-and-demand remunerations of the merchant marine; only the windfalls of prize money compensated for this deficiency, and sometimes those windfalls were whittled away by unscrupulous agents. Life in the Royal Navy was also more hierarchical; its discipline harsher; its incidental perks fewer. The camaraderie of battle offered its compensations. John Nicol, an Edinburgh cooper and carpenter who spent a long career in the merchant and Royal Navy, remembered with some pride the battle off Cape St Vincent in 1797 and the courage of men, women²⁷ and boys on the *Goliah*. He was a loyalist, too, who would not “hear the government spoken against” in a politically polarized Edinburgh. Yet in the end his fourteen years’ service in the royal navy counted for little. He failed to get a pension from Greenwich hospital, and scrambled to make ends meet in his late 50s, subsisting on coffee made from

²⁵ TNA, Adm 1/581, ff. 86–89.

²⁶ TNA, Adm 36/12069, muster book of the *Britannia*, 1 Jan. 1794 – 31 Jan 1795.

²⁷ There were often a few women sailing on a man of war, usually the wives of NCOs, like the gunner, carpenter or boatswain. The navy did not encourage the practice, but it was left to the discretion of the captain. See David Cordingly, *Women sailors and sailors’ women: an untold Maritime History* (New York, 2001). Nicol talks of women joining boys in carrying the gunpowder to the cannons and of the gunner’s wife who broke his fatigue by giving him a drink of wine. Several women were wounded in the battle, one died, and one gave birth to a son “in the heat of the action.” *The Life and Adventures of John Nicol, Mariner*, ed. Tim Flannery (New York, 1997), 174–175.

the raspings of bread and a few potatoes.²⁸ The fear of the poorhouse haunted him, as it did some of the families whose seafarers were swept up by the press-gangs of Bristol. “I must trust to your goodness to Pardon me for taking the Liberty,” wrote Margaret Giles in May 1813, “the purport of which is my Husband James Giles is unfortunately Impressed in His Majesty’s Service. I am Left in a very distressed situation with a small family and near the birth of another, and if I lose him we must all come to the Parish.” [562] These documents point to that predicament and the travails of manning the navy (and evading the gangs) in Georgian Bristol. It is hoped they will be a fitting contrast to the kind of triumphal naval histories that abound in the bookshops, offering a different social history to one of the eighteenth century’s most important and visible institutions.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 183–192.

DOCUMENTS¹

A: THE WARS AGAINST SPAIN AND FRANCE 1739–1748

1. Impressment begins July 1739

Bristol, July 28. An Express arrived here last Saturday Night from London to the Magistrates of this City, on which Account the Constables were convened at the Council-House, and at Ten that Night were order'd to impress all able-bodied Men as well Landmen as Sea Men, for his Majesty's Service. The Magistrates continued at the Council-House till Two or Three in the Morning, by which Time the Constables had secured near 100 in Bridewell. Sunday and Monday Nights the Impress continued, when upwards of 100 more were taken into Custody. Tuesday Morning they pass'd their several Examinations, when only about 70 were judg'd necessary for the Service of the Navy.

[*Read's Weekly Journal*, 4 August 1739]

2. Captain Robert Fytche to Josiah Burchett, Esquire, Secretary to the Admiralty, 18 May 1740

Ruby at the Hamoaze (Plymouth Sound), 18th May 1740

Sir,

Having put Several of my Sick Men ashoar to the Hospital, I went with my Surgeon yesterday to see how they were taken care of, and beg leave to assure you never was more surprized to find so Nasty a place, words cannot express in what a miserable condition the poor Sick Men were in, the Wards stink that I could not bear them, and my Men told me the sheets they gave them were lousey when put on the Beds, the nurses such Dirty creatures I never saw. It was half past Ten in the

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the provenance of the document is The National Archives, London. Please note paraphrased passages are marked by an asterisk and an indent.

morning when I was there, and neither surgeon nor Mate had been to visit them, they were then going to breakfast on Milk Porridge, but it was at least Two Thirds Water, and not a Morsel of Bread in the Hospital. It would be too tedious to tell you all the particulars, therefore, shall only say that every thing looked more like Prison than a place for Sick People. Who is the Surgeon[I] cannot tell, for I could not find him either at his duty, or at home I thought it my duty to acquaint their Lordships of this, as there is now Two hundred Men new Sick ashore from the Several Ships and are dying daily for want of care, and necessaries.

I am, Sir, your most humble servant, Robert Fytche.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 305]

3. Captain Robert Fytche to Josiah Burchett, 18 May 1740

Ruby, Hamoaze, May 25th 1740

Sir,

Captain Mitchell of his Majestie's Sloop *Swift*, being ordered immediately upon a Cruize after some Privateers, and having applyd to me for some men to compleat his Complement, have lent him Eight Men for that purpose (and the Cruize only) my Ship being Quite clear for the Dock, and have put on board him besides, five men which I got out of such homeward bound Merchant Ships, not knowing how to secure them from Deserting if kept here, till was fit for the Sea; and [I] have spared Captain Fox of the *Newcastle* five more which I impressed yesterday, and as it is impossible to keep my Number of Men compleat, or procure Seamen for his Majesty's Service without being sometimes more than my Complement, and have no order for bearing Supernumeraries² though am obliged to receive such seamen as are discharged from the Hospital belonging to other Ships, and as most of the Captains have such a General Order, I hope their Lordships will send one to indemnify me from any Difficulties that may happen in passing my accounts by that means, and am, Sir, &c

[Adm 1/1780 f. 306]

4. Captain Robert Fytche to Joseph Burchett, 27 May 1740

Ruby, Hamoaze, May 27th 1740

Sir,

I have been using all possible diligence to comply with their Lordships' Order of Twenty-first instant for turning over my men into the *Newcastle*, but find it a very difficult matter to get them together. As my Ship has been sometimes at the Jetty Head, it was not possible to keep them on board, and[as I] have been clear for Docking for some days and no ship to put them into, could not prevent their straggling, and a great number sick a Shoar and others very weak desired leave

² A supernumerary is a member of a ship's crew over and above her established complement. Volunteers and impressed men were supernumeraries when they were transported from Bristol to Plymouth, where they were then assigned to particular ships and crews. Prisoners of war were often entered as supernumeraries as well.

to go home to their families to recruit their Strength, I have given some of them Tickets for a few days and don't the least Doubt of their returning to their Duty if the news of their being to be turn'd over does not reach them. I have discharged all the able and ordinary seamen I have been able to get together, except those sick ashore and others employed upon the Service, and as I am order'd to procure Seamen by pressing or otherwise, which cannot be performed without people I can trust, and the Petty Officers and their Crews the fittest persons for that Service, I look upon it as their Lordships intentions I should not discharge them[the petty officers & crews], and have sent a List how they are dispos'd of it, by which their Lordships will see I would not send more than I have now. Tomorrow or next day we are to be taken into the Dock,[I] hope to be able by next post to acquaint their Lordships how long she will take repairing. The Builder talks of about a month, if he finds no greater defects than he has already discovered. It is impossible to express with what reluctancy the Men left the Ship and humble wish it has not a bad effect upon the rest and prevent them from returning for some time, tho I believe they will not run away from my Ship. I have ordered Captain Young of the *Bonita* to put his supernumerarys on board the *Newcastle*. The *Winchester* and *Swift* sloop, the *Victory's* and *Carolina's* Tenders sailed this Morning with the Wind at South but little of it,

[Adm 1/1780 f. 307]

5. Captain Robert Fytche to Joseph Burchett, 25 August 1740

Ruby in King Road, Aug 25th 1740

Sir,

This Morning about four o'Clock I anchored here with His Majestie's Ship under my Command, having yesterday left the *Charming Sally* Tender with my second Lieutenant, two midshipmen and Twenty Men to Cruize off Ilford Comb[Ilfracombe] and Lundy to impress men for His Majestie's Fleet, the other Tenders not at Plymouth when I sailed last Fryday, and one Tender will be as much as I shall be able to Man, if I am to Cruize with the Ship, which I believe will be expected by the Merchants here; and their Lordships will see by the weekly account which I now send that I shall goe out very Short of Complement, not by the Numbers Born[e], but by the Chequed & Sick Men.

I have this Day Impress'd four men out of the *Centurion* from Virginia and am going to Bristol to consult with the Merchants in what manner I can be most Serviceable to them, and shall do all in my Power to make them easy, and for the good of the service, I must desire their Lordships' directions how the Men sent in the Room of those Impressed in Ships to Bristol during my absence, are to be taken care of, for is some person is not Ordered to Subsist them till they are to be taken on Board again, either by me, or their Tenders, they will Certainly desert and go on Board the Merchant Men, for the Masters will turn them adrift as soon as they come in. I spoke to several Coasters in my Passage but could get no intelligence of any Privateers being upon the Coast,

The wind NW

[Adm 1/1780 f. 316]

6. Captain Robert Fytche to Josiah Burchett, 3 September 1740*Ruby* in Kingroad, Sept 3rd 1740

Sir,

I have receiv'd yours of the 28th of August & have acquainted Mr Burroughs with it. The Tender I left off Lundy is not yet return'd, but by the Men[that] come in the ships, find she has pressed Eleven Seamen. It is impossible to get any here, the Pilots' Boats meeting the Ships below the Holmes & putting their Men ashoar before any Boats can board them. Inclosed in my Weekly Account, I am, Sir, &c Robert Fytche.

Margin: acquaint the Mayor of Bristol in writing about the pilot boats which practice is very prejudicial to HM Service.

[Adm 1780 f. 317]

7. Captain Robert Fytche to Josiah Burchett, 8 September 1740*Ruby* in Kingroad, Sept 8th 1740

Sir,

I have receiv'd their Lordships' Order of the 4th Instant and have acquainted Doctor Trench, Agent for the Sick & Hurt seamen with it, who informs me the small Pox is broke out amongst the Spanish prisoners which may prove of dangerous Consequence & infect my Ship's Company if I should take them on board at this time, as I only wait for a wind to proceed with the outward bound Ships to the Westward and to Cruize for the Protection of the Trade as the Mayor & Merchants here shall desire, and must beg leave to assure their Lordships the Wind & Weather is the only thing that has kept me here so long. I have in my Boats since my last[letter] Press'd Thirty Seamen, but have heard nothing of my Tender these Ten Days.

Margin: inform Fytche he is not to take the Spanish prisoners entered[as seamen] as previously ordered. The sick and wounded to be quarantined.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 318]

8. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 31 January 1741*Ruby* in Kingroad, 31st Jan 1741

Honourable Sir,

In consequence of their Lordships' Commission bearing date 22nd instant, I have taken possession as Captain of his Majesties Ship, the *Ruby*, in Kingroad, and beg leave to acknowledge their Lordships' Orders to cruize with her in Bristol Channel for ye protection of the Trade, in such manner as ye Merchants of this City shall desire; Upon which account I this day consulted with a Body of them, & laid before

them the instructions I have received, who gave me for answer that Cruizing only in Bristol Channel was of little or no signification, and unless I could proceed with their Trade (as formerly was the Custom) a hundred leagues into ye Sea, they could not apprehend ye Service. I urged my inclinations to do Everything consistent with my orders, but they seemed to hope by proper application they should succeed in having me answer their desires.

By orders to ye Lieutenant of ye Ship I am directed when I go to sea to leave ye Master, Carpenter, and Surgeons Mate behind as Evidences. My Second Lieutenant is not returned in ye Tender, & the third Lieutenant has not yet appeared, which with the Officers ordered to be left behind, the Surgeon sick ashore, & his other Mate in ye Tender, I am much disabled in regard to my offices; however will proceed to Sea on ye least application of ye Merchants, & put in Execution their Lordships' Orders, but presume to remonstrate that if their Lordships should think proper to direct me any distance from Kingroad, it might be necessary (as many seamen may escape being impress'd, & many Landmen who would voluntarily enter for ye Service, may be lost in my absence for want of a Ship to receive them) that some ship or Tender remain her whilst I am absent. I have received their Lordships' Commands to discharge the first Mate and Boatswain of the *Europa*, George Willson Master, & to supply her with a Sufficient Number of Men to carry her in ye River of Thames, which I shall take care to observe. There is only one ship in Kingroad.

I am, Honourable Sir, your most obedient humble servant, Richard Frogmere.

Margin: HM tender *Lord Eldon* to be ordered into Bristol Channel to procure men instead of Whitehaven. Let him know it.

[Adm 1/1780 f.265]

9. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 4 February 1741

Ruby in Kingroad, February 4th 1741

Honourable Sir,

In obedience to their Lordships' Orders I would have discharged ye 1st Mate & Boatswain of the *Europa*, said to be pressed by the ship I command; but upon enquiry find neither the 1st Mate nor Boatswain is press'd, the 1st Mate being now actually aboard the *Europa*, & ye Boatswain left her abroad, which is attested by every particular man who has been taken out of ye *Europa*. I will supply her with a sufficient Number of Men to carry her into the River of Thames, & direct them to apply to Navy Board for conduct money to Bristol.

I beg leave to observe there is a Man belonging to ye *Vernon* Privateer who on ye 23rd of December last came off in a Boat, & took six men away with him, & landed them, but was taken himself & put in Irons here, & was directed by their Lordships to be continued 'till further Orders, and as their Lordships have taken no notice of ye Man since, I presume to remind them of him, and I apprehend they think ye Man to be a Deserter from ye *Ruby*, but he belonged to ye *Vernon*, so shall wait their Directions. I would have sent my supernumeraries round in the Buckingham's Tender to Portsmouth, But she sailed before I received their Lordships' directions. I presume to say if there was two or three Tenders employed at the port it would very

well answer ye Purpose of raising men. I am ready to sail at a moments application of ye Merchants, but they desire I will stay ye return of your Letters. My Tender is still at Plimouth (sic).

Margin: to put him[the deserter] out of Ruby and keep him in safe custody.
[Adm 1/1780 f. 266]

10. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 11 February 1741

Ruby in Kingroad, February 11th 1741

Honourable Sir,

The Merchants of this City of Bristol have applied to the Magistrates and together with them have appointed Monday next for the Sailing of the Convoy; when I shall be sure to sail accordingly, Winds and Weather permitting. I can hear nothing of my own Tender, and that ordered from Whitehaven is not yet arrived,[so] that[I] am at a loss how to dispose of my supernumeraries. If I could be allowed to pass them aboard the *Europa* I believe they might be taken care of upon very easy terms which I must be obliged to do if no Tender comes before I sail.

[Adm 1/1780 f.267]

11. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 16 February 1741

Ruby in Kingroad, 16th Feb 1741, Wind SSW and blows hard

Honourable Sir,

If the Wind and Weather have proved favourable I should have sailed today with his Majestie's Ship under my command and shall take ye first occasion that offers.

A ship arrived here last night in forty six days from Antegoa[Antigua], the master of which says Sir Chaloner Ogle appointed to sail from Dominico four days before he left Antegoa[Antigua], and that Lord Cathcart died at Dominico ye day the fleet arrived there, which account he says had from Captain Hawke of ye *Portland*.

Upon application from ye Mayor of Bristol, founded upon the Lord Chief Justice's warrant for apprehending one James Player, who stands indicted for several Robberys on the Highway, and other Crimes and Misdemeanors, I yesterday examined a Man who lately entered with me by that name & who confessd himself to be ye very person mentioned in ye Indictment, which with ye Conviction of two Evidences who have sworn of ye Man, I thought it reasonable to send him ashore & deliver him to ye Officers of the Peace. My Master, Carpenter, Surgeon's Mate, and the other Evidences are put on shore, in order to attend the Tryall of Capt. Goodere.³ I have

³ Captain Samuel Goodere was the previous commander of HMS *Ruby*. Along with Matthew Mahoney and Charles White, he was tried and convicted of murdering his brother, Sir John Dineley Goodere, on board the ship on 19 January 1741. They were tried in Bristol, 17–26 March 1741, and executed on 15 April 1741. The executions "drew in vast Crowds of People for some Miles around the Country, which together with the Citizens, made the Concourse exceeding Great." [*All Alive and Merry or the London Daily Post*, 22 April 1741]. For the trial, see *A Complete Collection of State Trials*, 6 vols. (London, 1742) 6:795–834.

sent twenty of my Supernumeraries aboard ye *Europa* to assist her round ye River, & the Master victuals them for their Service. No Tender is arrived.

Margin: enclose Lordships' orders concerning Captain Goodere's witness no 1.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 268]

12. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 9 February 1741

Ruby in Kingroad, February 9th, 1741

Honourable Sir,

Immediately upon ye receipt of their Lordships' Orders of ye 3rd instant, directing me to convoy the Trade of the City of Bristol one hundred leagues to the West of Ireland, I communicated the said Orders to the Magistrates of that City who have consulted with the Merchants, & will appoint a particular day for the Sailing of the Trade, which day I hope their Lordships will approve of my insisting on without any regard to a second application, which I presume will prevent many inconveniencys; and I on my part will be sure to Observe the Time with the Utmost Exactness.

When I have any Tender, which I may hope for soon, Both by your Letter of ye 5th instant & ye Expectation of my own Tender from Plymouth, I will dispatch away my Supernumerarys, & as Their Lordships were pleased to Direct They should be sent to Plymouth in ye *Buckingham* Tender, I hope I shall Judge right if I send them there now.

The *Europa* who was drove ashore in this Channel proves very leaky and ye Master has applied to me for some Extra Hands to work at ye Pump & enable him to get round to the River of Thames, I shall therefore as ye ship is in great distress supply him with a reasonable Number of my Supernumerary Landmen, And will give Directions to ye Officer who goes with them upon their Security in ye River, to apply to ye Regulating Captains, and receive their Orders how to dispose of them, & will take care to set off their First Entrys upon the List I shall send with them, which I hope will meet with their Lordships' approbation.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 269]

13. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 20 February 1741

Ruby Kingroad, Feb 20th, 1740/1. Wind ENE

Honourable Sir,

The supernumerarys I put aboard the *Europa* were twenty Able Bodied Landmen, such as ye Master desired, to stand by ye Pump, and as I had no Tender here, & Landmen coming in daily, and many of them wanting Beds, which I could not supply them with, I thought it for ye Service to send them round as soon as I could, and in ye manner I have done it, I keep my own men here, & save ye Government the expense of Conduct money back. I own my Omission and ask their Lordships' pardon in not calling these men Landmen in my Letter of ye 11th instant, and should deservedly

have incurred their Lordships Displeasure Had I attempted to put a prest Man where there was ye least probability of losing him. The *Buckingham's* Tender came up two days since; when I put aboard her twelve Men (as Many as she could take) and she is sailed for Spithead. I am now getting under way with seven sail, who have taken Orders, & shall proceed with them according to their Lordships' Directions

[Adm 1/1780 f.270]

14. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 1 April 1741

Ruby Kingroad April 1st, 1741

Honourable Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint you that yesterday morning I arrived with his Majestie's Ship *Ruby* under my Command at Kingroad, where I have received their Lordships' several orders, bearing dates of ye 18th of February, the 13th, 19th, 20th & the 23 March 1740/1, as also two proclamations promising a Bounty to Seamen who enter voluntarily to serve on board the Fleet, I have likewise received a Letter from Capt. Brown of the *Duke* telling me that in Obedience of ye Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, bearing date of 10th of February last, He was to apply to me for my assistance in procuring what men might be got at Bristol, for his Majestie's Ship *Duke*, and at present I having no Orders for that purpose, must desire you will be pleased to communicate it to their Lordships that I may govern myself accordingly.

I can find no Orders to either of ye late Captains of the *Ruby* to bear a pilot for Bristol Channel, which is of so absolute a necessity that I hope to meet their Lordships Consent for Bearing One During the time I am employed in this Service,

As it may very possibly happen upon my return from convoying ye Trade of this Place, I may meet with some homeward Bound Ships on the Coast of Ireland, Designed for that Kingdom. I would therefore desire to Know If I may impress their Men, & if so, I may recover my own, sent in their rooms.

[Adm 1/1780 f274]

15. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 8 April 1741

Ruby in Kingroad April 8 1741

Honourable Sir,

The Navy Board having signified to me they had taken up a Tender calld ye *Briton Ferry*, which Tender is arrived here, I have put an Officer and Man on board her to carry her to Liverpool to be surveyd & measured by ye Officer appointed for that purpose. I desire their Lordships' approbation of the same, as I have at present no orders about her.

Yesterday I applyd to the Mayor of Bristol for one Jonathan Felmey, a prisoner in Bridewell, who was entered for ye *Ruby* the 25th December 1739, but run from her ye 28th of January 1740. To save his wages for the *Ruby* upon ye Proclamation[for a pardon], He enterd for ye *Duke*, & is Run from her; at last he enterd for a Merchant

Ship at this place, received a months' pay in advance, & upon refusal to go ye Voyage, was taken up & put into Bridewell, where I heard of him. There was also another able seaman in prison, who I released upon paying their Fees, and they are Both now on board the *Ruby*. And Jonathan Felme, being a Deserter, I have confined him in Irons & shall wait for their Lordships' orders what I am to do with him. I hope they will be pleased to allow me ye Disbursements I have made on this occasion, as also such as may reasonably occur for ye future.

Some of my people, who on my late Cruise were left behind at the Hospital here, were discharged upon their time being up, & waited some time before ye return of ye Ship or Tender. They therefore desire their Lordships' Indulgence to continue their first entrys on ye Ship's Books that they may lose no wages by a re-entry; since they waited the Return of ye Ship on their own expenses. If ye wind continues westerly I don't doubt to procure a Number of Men in a short time. The Tenders belonging to ye *Duke* and *Cambridge* will sail round ye first Convenience of wind and weather.

[Adm 1/1780, f. 276]

16. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 11 April 1741

Ruby in Kingroad, April 11th, 1741.

Honourable Sir,

I had orders from my Lords Commissioners of ye Admiralty when I last saild to leave the Surgeon's first Mate of his Majestie's Ship under my command behind, on ye trial of Captain Goodere, who immediately after ye trial thought proper to go to London without any leave, and where he is at present I know not. If he had been on board his own ship, I could have complyd with their Lordships' directions in sending Mr John Carnick, my surgeon's second mate to Town, in order to pass his examination for a Surgeon, and when I have another mate will forthwith send him.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 278]

17. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 18 April 1741

Ruby in Kingroad, April 18th, 1741

Honourable Sir,

Inclosed I send you my weekly account. The Tenders belonging to ye *Cambridge* & *Duke* and *Buckingham* will sail for their respective ports with as many men as they can entertain, as soon as ye wind and weather permits. One of my Tenders is Cruizing off Lundy & ye other gone for Liverpool to be measured, & to return to this Channel as soon as may be. I hope allways to be capable to put men on board any Tender that may call here. I have received their Lordships Orders of ye 14th Instant

[Adm 1/1780 f. 279]

18. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 22 April 1741*Ruby* in Kingroad, April 22nd, 1741

Honourable Sir,

James Manuel, an Indian about forty years of age, & a Seaman, is impressd on board his Majesties Ship under my Command, upon which I was applyd to by a Merchant of Bristol to discharge him, by telling me He was a Servant to a person in New England, but not producing any Indenture, or Covenant, I told him I could not discharge him, and have continued him for the Service. The Merchant says ye Master who brought him home will take his Oath that James Manuel is a Covenant Servant to Mr Nathaniel Bangs of Boston in New England.

I shall observe their Lordships' Directions in taking off the R[un] set against Mr. Dredgron's Name on my ship books. I have put on board ye *Cambridge* Tender fifteen supernumerarys, & on board ye *Duke's* Fifty.

Margin: discharge the negroe (sic).

[Adm 1/1780, f. 280]

19. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 17 May 1741*Ruby* in Kingroad, May 17th, 1741

Honourable Sir,

This Morning His Majestie's Ship *Fowey* arrived at Kingroad & as soon as ye wind and weather presents, I shall pursue Their Lordships' Directions for Plimouth. The *Briton Ferry* Tender, taken lately into the service & under my orders, sailed hence the 15th of ye last month with my First Lieutenant for Liverpool, in order to be measured there by the Naval Officer, & having heard nothing of her since give me some concern,

[Adm 1/1780 f. 281]

***20. Captain Charles Peers to Josiah Burchett, 6 June 1741**

Captain James Peers of HMS *Fowey*, in King road, informed the Lords of the Admiralty that he had impressed some trowmen and they could expect some complaints from Bristol. He told their lordships "that they are very good Seamen, and such as have sailed out of the Port of Bristol for many years, they living in this neighbourhood, and have secreted themselves in these vessels, under colour of being Landmen."

[Adm 1/2284 (Charles Peers) 6 June 1741]

21. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 24 October 1741

Ruby in Kingroad October 24th 1741

Honourable Sir,

Agreeable to your Letter of 17th instant I have caused Enquiry to be made as privately as possible after Walter Williams, a midshipman who belonged to Capt. Dyer of his Majesty's ship the *Rupert's Prize*. He is represented to live at Thomas Reeves & William Williams's at St Nicholas Place, Bristol; But I can hear of no such place, or such Men in ye whole City. However I shall as Opportunity offers make further Enquiry about him & if he is to be had, will secure him.

I shall comply with their Lordships' Directions in employing ye Tenders that may be sent to me, & what supernumerarys I can get, shall be carried round to be depos'd of as ye Commanding Officer there shall direct. The *Leopard* Tender is sail'd this day to cruize off Lundy to press for ye *Carolina*.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 290]

22. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 13 November 1741

Ruby in Kingroad, Nov 13th, 1741

Honourable Sir,

From ye time of my arrival here, I have waited in Expectation that the Merchants of Bristol would apply to me for Convoy to their Trade; But they are all so pressing for a Market by ye Under-Writers making no difference in their Insurance, because a Ship that goes with, or without Convoy, that when Ships fall down into Kingroad, They push out as soon as possible without asking or expecting any protection from me; therefore, as neither of ye Tenders from Portsmouth or Plymouth have joined me, I presume it for ye Service that I should cruise some days in ye Channel as I am convinced many men are Landed from homeward-bound Ships before they get ye length of this place, & I shall accordingly sail tomorrow wind & weather permitting.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 291]

23. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 17 November 1741

Ruby, Kingroad, Nov 17th 1741

Honourable Sir,

The Wind Shifting to ye SW prevented my sailing with his Majesty's Ship under my Command as I proposed; and since ye Convener Tender is arrived from Portsmouth by order of Commissioner Hughes, & shall be employed in the Service in ye best Manner I can think of.

The Merchants of Bristol have this day applyd to me for a Convoy to their Trade, which they say shall be ready in Eight or Ten days, I shall therefore agreeable to their

Lordships' Instructions take the said Trade under my care, & proceed one hundred Leagues to ye Westward of Ireland.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 292]

24. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 21 November 1741

Ruby, Kingroad, Nov 21st 1741

Honourable Sir,

The Master of the Merchants Hall of Bristol has desired that Monday the 30th Instant may be ye Day appointed for ye Sailing of the Convoy. I have accordingly published my Design of Sailing.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 293]

25. Captain Richard Frogmere to Josiah Burchett, 13 December 1741

Ruby, Milford Haven Dec 13th 1741

Honourable Sir,

The Wind & Weather would not admit of my leaving Kingroad till ye 3rd Instant, when Notwithstanding ye Application made for a Convoy, & ye Long Notice given, only two Vessels would take Orders from me, & but one of them went to sea with me, tho' there were Ten others in ye Road that sailed ye same day. This Management of ye Merchants now, & at other times, induces me to believe that They do not so much solicit Convoy for ye Advantage they expect from it as Convoy, But ye Opportunities their Homeward Bound Trade have of Securing their Men in the absence of Men of War: When likewise Their Outward Bound Ships man without any Interruption and with too great a probability are supplyd with many Deserters from ye Fleet, I should therefore be glad of Their Lordships' Instructions to prevent so great an Evil; & I beg leave to offer, If a Number of Ships had Directions to send me a Man each, acquainted with their Crews, I might in a good measure put a Stop to this Practice.

I must beg their Lordships' leave to mention that as in this Cruise I sailed with only one Vessel I could not reconcile her to be ye Trade of Bristol. Therefore left her Fifty Leagues WSW from Scilly. If I judged wrong, I humbly pray their Lordships' Information how I should act for ye future, and only presume to say that ye time I may lose in going a hundred Le[a]gues to ye Westward of Ireland may be of worse Consequence to his Majestie's Service that ye Security of a single Merchant ship can be to ye advantage of ye Trade of Bristol. I hope their Lordships will forgive me If I have intimated anything Irregular, as I propose Nothing by it, but ye Publick Good. Tuesday ye eight of this month I spoke with ye *Firebrand* Fireship Fifty Leagues to ye Westward of Scilly, Express from Admiral Vernon.

Yesterday, being off this port with ye wind of ESE & likely to blow, I took ye Opportunity of harbouring here 'till Wind & Weather will allow me to return to Kingroad.

[Adm 1/1780 f. 294]

**26. John Dovey to Thomas Corbett, Esquire, Secretary to the Admiralty,
12 April 1742**

Clement's Inn, London, April 12th 1742

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint you that in obedience to your letter of the 29th of March last to me to subsist Lieutenant Roots of his Majestie's Shippe the *Russell* and such of his Press Gang as were in Bristol Gaol, I have ordered the said Lieutenant and one William Terrier the only person in Gaol besides the Lieutenant to be subsisted.

Being also directed to get an exact Information of the Circumstances of the fact & to lay the Same before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty with my opinions of the Nature of the Offence, I beg leave to acquaint you that the Information I have received from Bristol is as follows. The Shippe *Queen Mary* of the Port of Bristol, Captain Vaughan Commander, being outward bound to Jamaica had a Protection for ninety men and being in the Road ready to sail, The Surgeon and one of two of the men who had received their Monthly pay of the Merchants & contracted for the voyage were making off for the Land in order, as Captain Vaughan apprehended, to leave the Shipp, Upon which Captain Vaughan ordered out his boat after them and as they were Rowing, Lieutenant Roots and some of his Men Hailed to them to bring to, which they did not, being in pursuit of their own men. Whereupon the Lieutenant or some of his crew fired balls upon the men in the *Queen Mary's* boat, dangerously wounded one of them, and very much injured and hurt others. The loss of one of the wounded being despaired of, the Lieutenant and severall of the Crew were apprehended by Virtue of a Warrant from the Magistrates and the Lieutenant & Ferrier were Committed to Newgate and the rest either bailed or Discharged.

As to the nature of the offence, I apprehend it will be a breach of the Peace and if the fact comes out upon Evidence as above, I doubt it cannot be justified. They will indict the persons concerned for the assault and wounding and the Severall Parties will likewise bring Actions in order to recover Damages for the injury done them.

In obedience to your Letter of the fifth Instant, I wrote to Bristol to get the Lieutenant & Ferrier bailed and this Day have received an account that as they are strangers there it will be a difficult matter to get persons to bail them, for the Magistrates will require two Substantial persons of Bristoll well known to them to be bail for them. Therefore I must submit it to their Lordships whether it may not be proper to write to the Commissioners of the Customs to order their officers there to get two persons to bail them. When they are bailed they must not leave the place, or If they do, they must be ready to appear either at the Assizes or Sessions to which they are bound to appear. I am, &c John Dovey, Clements Inn, London

[Adm 1/3675 ff. 45–6]

***27. John Dovey to Thomas Corbett, 2 July 1742**

Dovey reported he had procured the services of Francis Freeman, Bristol attorney, but the issue of sureties for bail remained outstanding, as "the Merchants of Bristol insisted upon great Bail." Dovey proposed a solution, but "their Lordships did not think that proper but that the Prisoners must be

subject to the Directions of the Law. Which is they must lye till the Gaol Delivery and then Mr. Freeman will take care to make a proper defence for them which is all that can be done for them

As to the Lieutenants wherein he says he has addressed the Sollicitor several times but never heard one word from him but by persons who have called at my Chambers to ask questions about bailing him and I have always given them the best directions I could therein.”

[Adm 1/3675, ff. 67–8]

Dovey subsequently learned that the merchants of Bristol were determined to prosecute Lieutenant Roots “to the utmost.” The Admiralty was not prepared to back down “on such unreasonable terms.”

[Add 1/3675 f. 74.]

***28. Francis Winnington to Thomas Corbett, 6 September 1742**

Francis Winnington reported on the trial of Roots and Ferrier at the Bristol assizes in September 1742 before Justice Denison. The plaintiffs, Clarke and Thomas, argued that Captain Vaughan of the Jamaica bound vessel had a letter of marque as a privateer and protections for his men.⁴ The plaintiffs said that the surgeon was attempting to desert the ship and seamen had been ordered by the captain to recover him. Lieutenant Roots and his press gang fired at the boat that was pursuing the surgeon, thinking that the sailors were trying to evade impressment. One bullet pierced the boatswain’s hat. Ferrier’s shot hit seaman Clarke in his groin and through the leg, and because the shot was four inches below the knee, “the Ball carried away part of the substance of the knee bone and went through his Ham up to the Centre of his Thigh, from whence it was extracted. That the main bone of his Legg was actually destroyed for about an inch and a half, that a Feaver attended him, that he was confined to his Bed for 3 months or upwards.” The surgeon deposed that “Clarke was in a fair way of doing well, but doubted whether he would ever be able to make use of his Legg.” He said his own fee for attending Clarke was 20 guineas, a factor that would have to be taken into account if damages were awarded. The defence counsel for Lieutenant Roots was Gundry, who claimed that Roots had intelligence that some men had deserted the *Jeffries* and also the *Queen Mary*, both bound for Jamaica. They searched the former and then, seeing the men going ashore from the *Queen Mary*, supposed them deserters and hailed them; “but no regard being paid thereto, they fired a first and second time over them, and at length a third shott, which accidentally wounded the plaintiff.” Two witnesses were subpoena’d for the defence but Gundry thought they would “do more harm than good” and so he did not use them. “Twas very certain a verdict for the Plaintiff could not be avoided and therefore Mr

⁴ A letter of marque was a licence issued by the Admiralty courts to authorize a ship to act as a privateer during the war and to capture legitimate prizes. It would often have come with protections for the crew from impressment by the navy.

Gundry in the most pathetick manner address'd himself to the Court and the Jury, in Mitigation of Damages. But Mr Justice Denison seem'd much inclined against the Defendants and told the Jury, that although a regard was due to the King's Ships, yet that great care ought to be taken by the officers in the execution of their Duty, so as to not injure the rest of the King's subjects. And that he knew of no Authority that a man of war's crew had of firing Balls upon mariners belonging to Merchant ships in order to oblige them to bring to, and that there was no evidence to prove the assertion." He instructed the jury to take no notice of Gundry and his co-counsel Vernon. The damages awarded by the jury to Clarke amounted to 120 guineas. Francis Winnington reported to the Admiralty that Clarke "certainly will be a Cripple as long as he lives, and never fit to go to sea as an able mariner again." The damages awarded to Jenkin Thomas, the other plaintiff, were lighter, £40. "The People of the City of Bristol in general were greatly exasperated at the defendants firing at the crew in the *Queen Mary* boat with ball," Winnington concluded, "and I apprehend that was the reason of the Jury's giving such large Damages." [Adm 1/3675 ff. 88–90]

Roots and Ferrier were not immediately discharged from prison, perhaps because the Admiralty was laggard in paying their fees. James Roots died in gaol, 6 February 1743, after "a tedious and lingering Illness." The keeper of the gaol said that he had supported him in victuals, drink, lodging, since his confinement and this now amounted to £60. Winnington said the damages and costs of the two actions was £204, the costs of each trial being £19.

[Adm 1/3675 ff. 181–83]

29. A report on the prosecution of Lieutenant Roots and William Farrier, March 1742

Last Friday[26 March 1742] were committed to Gaol at Bristol Lieutenant James Roots and William Farrier, a Sailor, belonging to one of his Majesty's Tenders, now pressing in King Road for Seamen, for assaulting in the said Road divers People in a Boat, and also for firing into the said Boat a Musquet loaded with Powder and Ball several Times; which Farrier discharged at the command of Lieutenant Roots whereby two Men were wounded so as to endanger their Lives. The Occasion of this Action was on Account of the Boat's not readily bringing to.

[*Champion*; the *Daily Post*, 30 March 1742]

30. Newspapers accounts of the affray on the *Bremen Factor*, 25 April 1743

On Monday last[25 April 1743] a Press-Gang from the *Mortar Bomb-Ketch* going to board the *Bremen Factor* then lying to the Eastward of the Holms (within the Liberties of this City) and endeavouring to press the Men thereof, Alexander Broadfoot (one of the *Bremen* Crew) having a Blunderbuss in his Hand loaded with Swan-Shot, presented it to the Gang, telling them that if they dared to touch him, he would let fly amongst them: But they not regarding his Threats, endeavoured to

take him; on which he shot among them, whereby Cornelius Callahan (one of the Gang) was kill'd, and another wounded. Broadfoot was afterwards secur'd and put in Irons on board the Tender, which is gone round Land[to Plymouth]. Wednesday the Coroner's Inquest sat on the body of the Deceas'd and brought in a Verdict, Wilful Murder. We are told the Tender sail'd before the proper Officer dispatch'd by the Magistrates could arrive Time enough to take the Body of the Prisoner; but as the Fact was committed within the Liberties of this City, he must be brought hither to take his Trial for the said Murder.

[*Daily Post* 3 May 1743, also reported in *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 3 May 1743, *London Morning Advertiser*, 4 May 1743, *Common Sense* 7 May 1743]

Bristol Assizes 30 August 1743: Alexander Broadfoot, charged with the murder of Cornelius Callahan (at the Assizes for this City and County), was found guilty of manslaughter and burnt in the Hand.

[*London Daily Post*, 6 September 1743]

31. The Broadfoot trial in public memory, October 1770

To the PRINTER

Sir,

The Question touching the Legality of pressing Mariners for the Public Service being a point of great and national Importance; and the inhumanity lately exercised on Board the *Duke of Richmond* Indiaman having made that Practice a Subject of General Conversation, I apprehend the following authentic Case will not at this time be unacceptable to your Readers.

I am, your's, &c, E.G. Middle Temple, Oct. 6, 1770.

At the Gaol Delivery held for the city and county of Bristol, August 30, 1743, Alexander Broadfoot was indicted for the murder of Cornelius Calahan, a sailor, belonging to his Majesty's ship, the *Mortar* sloop.

The case was thus: Capt. Hanway, Commander of the *Mortar* sloop had a warrant from the Lords of the Admiralty...impowering him to impress...seamen for his Majesty's service. The warrant expressly directeth "that the Captain shall not instruct any person with the execution of it, but a Commissioned Officer; and shall insert the name and office of the person instructed on the back of the warrant.

The Lieutenant of the *Mortar* sloop (the only commissioned officer on board besides the Captain) was deputed by him to impress according to the tenor of the warrant.

On the 25th of April, Capt. Hanway being at anchor in Kingroad...ordered the ship's boat down the Channel in order to press as they should see opportunity; but the Lieutenant staid in Kingroad on board with the Captain.

Towards evening, the boat came up with the merchantman, the *Bremen Factor*, homeward bound in that part of the Channel which is within the county of the city of Bristol, but some leagues from Kingroad, and some of the crew went on board

in order to press, who being informed that one or two of the *Bremen's* men were concealed in the hold, Calahan, with three others of the boat's crew, went thither in search of them; whereupon Broadfoot, one of the *Bremen's* men (who had before provided himself with a blunderbuss, and pistols for his defence against the press gang) called out and asked them what they came for? He was assured by some of the press-gang, "We come for you and your comrades;" whereupon he cried out "Keep back, I have a blunderbuss load'd with swan shot." Upon this the others stopped but did not retire. He then cried out, "Where is your lieutenant?" and being answered "He is not far off," immediately fired among them. By this shot Calahan was killed on the spot, and one or two more of the press-gang wounded.

The case being thus, the Recorder[Michael Foster] was of opinion that the boat's crew having been sent out with a general order to impress as they should see opportunity, and having in pursuance of that order boarded the vessel without a proper Officer, expressly against the terms of the Captain's warrant, every thing they did was to be looked upon as an attempt upon the liberty of the persons concerned without any legal warrant; and he accordingly directed the Jury to find Broadfoot guilty of manslaughter.

[*Public Register*, 16–18 October 1770; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 8–10 October 1770]

32. Captain Savage Mostyn to Thomas Corbett, 3 September 1744

London, 3 Sept 1744

Sir,

I must also acquaint you that one William Richards has deserted from his Majesty's Ship *Hampton Court* under my command the 30th of last month, and is gone to Bristol, where his wife keeps the Sign of the Superb. As Deserters frequently fly to that Port for Protection, 'twould greatly discourage desertions if their Lordships would please to order this Man to be apprehended and tried. I am, Sir, S Mostyn.

PS The inclosed Letter for William Richards I have just received, & have at the Bottom of it wrote William Richard his description.

William Richard, aged 27 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, Brown Complexion and has the letters WR on his left hand, two Cutts on the right side of his head, Served his time to Sea out of Bristol and was born there, lies att the Sign of the Superb upon the Back, att Bristoll, Married.

[Adm 1/2100 (Savage Mostyn), 3 Sept. 1744]

Enclosure: Bristol, August 29 1744[from Hester Richards, his wife]

My Dear,

This coms to acquaint you that this day I read your letter bearing date ye 25 August 1744 & sent you ansor[answer] to the first the 21 of this instant which I hope you have read before yours come to my hands. I wrote my mind to you in full and bege that if you could by aney means gett ashoar to make the best of your waye home, I find you have liberty to goe a shore ...how could you parpose (propose) to meet me att gospor (Gosport) you had as good beed (bid) me shutt up the doars and leave of

bisnis (business) and that I will doe if you do not come home, my house is att this time full of Logars (lodgers) I have not a bed only I will shoarly (surely) leve of bisnis and goe in the contry I will never make my life so unhapy as I do I am a mear slave I canot hould it (her thoughts or emotions) nither will I now I write you my mind from the fullness of my hart I beg you will do the like to me and then I shall be satisfysed what I have to do for I canot hould out longer I have no famely to show for ...all the logers that is in my hous did belong to a man of war as you and thay left thayer ships and thear (there's) no body asks them wher they came from and so maye you but I believe you have more love for your ship and ship mats (mates) than for me and your hous. thear is none of yur ship mats[mates] have such a home to come to as you have. if they had that ship would not confine them as it does you. I was this day bound for severl mens months pay whear thay reseved (received) three pounds a month & was askt by the merchants why you delited to[stay] on board of a man of war and such wages given hear...butt if you would come home you should never cros(s) the seas no more while the wars lasts without you take me with you my dear. I have sent four gines (guineas) by William Baylis wife to be delivered to you...I wrote you in my last letter that my sister Betty is mared (married) to Dave Williams and that I was left alone. I canot trust my hous to any body...my Dear if you have a desire of coming home lett me know it in your next letter and if you get to south hamton (Southampton) and are in want of money you will be suplyed by mr martin any thing that you wist want you may gett thear...give my love to all your ship mats in partickler to Goarg Eliss (George Ellis). all his frends is well. tell him brother is gon a privatearin. he belongs to the king william of bristoll. thay have taken a prise some time gone and his prise money comes to upords (upwards) of to hundred pounds. my dear life all frends hear is well. I hope to have the hapy site of you before I writ maney letters more to you & concloud leaving to the protection of the allmighty god to direct you in your jerny (journey) home and that will make me hapy. I remaine your unhapy wife tell death."

signed Hester Richards

Margin: The Marshall of the Admiralty to go to Bristol & take up this Man. A Letter to him to make all Expedition possible thither least the Man should go on board a Privateer, and to take care to manage the Business with as much Secrecy as he can & carry him to Portsmouth & deliver him to the Admiralty or Commanding Officer there. Let him know that tis thought there are many Deserters at Bristol & therefore advise him to be on his guard.

B: THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR 1755–1763

33. Proceedings of the Common Council of Bristol, 17 May 1755

The House unanimously confirmed the Rewards which had been formerly given from this Corporation by the direction, and with the consent of Mr Mayor and many other Members of this House, for encouraging person to enter into his Majestie's Sea Service, and order'd and agreed that the monies already advanced on this occasion be charged to the Account of the Chamber, that such Rewards be revived and continued to be paid during the continuance of his Majesty's Royal Bounty for the like purpose; and that Mr Chamberlain do issue monies accordingly.

[Bristol Record Office, M/BCC/CCP/1/13, Bristol Common Council Proceedings 1754–1762, p.36]

34. Captain Samuel Graves to John Cleveland, Secretary to the Admiralty, 29 February 1756

Bristol February 29th 1756

Sir,

In obedience to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty Commands of the 23rd, I received on the 26th at night. I forthwith set out for this place, where I arrived late last night, to late to save the post. This morning I waited on the Mayor to let him know I was order'd here by their Lordships to procure men for his Majestie's Fleet and desired his assistance forwarding that service. By his answer he gave me no hope of success, for he directly declared there was not a man to be got at Bristol unless we took from protections. I told him I had no such orders. How just his report is, I can't determine; I have seen several seamen about this Day, but whether Protected or not, I can't yet know. As soon as the Lieutenants arrive which their Lordships are please to order on this service with proper press Gangs (for such men as are to

be hired here are not to be trusted) I shall do everything possible to procure men, if there is any to be got.

I am, Sir, with the utmost respect, Saml Graves.

[Adm 1/1833 (Samuel Graves), 29 Feb. 1756]

***35. Captain Samuel Graves to John Cleveland, 6 March 1756**

Captain Graves had orders to press from protections, but reported on 6 March that he was awaiting the *Prince Edward* tender to arrive in the King's road; "untill the arrival of that ship we have neither Boats nor men sufficient to venture on Shore at this riotous time, & an important attempt would answer no good end."

36. Captain Samuel Graves to John Cleveland, 11 March 1756

Bristol, 11th March 1756

In obedience to their Lordships' directions I have dismissed James Matthews who was pressed on Information that he had belong'd to one of His Majesty's Ships last War, and by that Information was detained. At the time he was impressed he did not say he was a Freeman of Bristol, nor when he was first examined...I kept him three Days in Bristol that he might give his vote, provided the party gave security for his return. As to everything else alledged by Sir John Philipps,⁵ it is Malicious, and without the least foundation. For the truth thereof I appeal to the Magistrates & I defy the whole Party who made the Complaint to prove one instance where either myself, Officers or Press Gang ever interfair'd in the Election or pursued anything besides the service we were ordered upon by their Lordships.

[Adm 1/1833 (Samuel Graves), 11 March 1756]

***37. Captain Samuel Graves to John Cleveland, 7 April 1756**

On 7 April 1756 Captain Graves reported that he had impressed one Thomas Dennison because he had heard that Dennison had previously belonged to men of war and was quite possibly a deserter. The opposition Whig, Henry Hobhouse, and others complained of Graves' behaviour and demanded that Dennison be discharged. In reply, Graves told them his men had been

⁵ Sir John Philipps had contested Bristol in the 1754 election but he was defeated. He remained active in Bristol politics, and canvassed on behalf of the lawyer, Jarrit Smith, in the 1756 by-election. Jarrit Smith narrowly won the election against the ministerial Whig candidate. See Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities. Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989), 294–99. Philipps and others accused Captain Graves and his gangs of helping the ministerial party by impressing Tory voters and providing bruisers to intimidate supporters of Jarrit Smith who wanted to vote at the hustings. see *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 13 March 1756. The newspaper reported that Sir John Philipps had successfully applied to the Admiralty for the discharge of James Matthews, a blacksmith and freeman who had been taken up by Graves' gang. Matthews is the subject of this letter.

attacked with a poker and clubs when taking up Dennison and refused their request. “They press me with something like threats to clear him & wanted to know if I had an information against him.” Hobhouse and company then went to the mayor to get writs against the gang. Mr Elton, the town clerk, informed Graves of this application two days later and suggested he discharge Dennison, as “the party would make a great disturbance in the town, that they were a turbulent people.” Elton said Thomas Dennison was a householder, not the sort of man normally impressed; Graves replied he was a seaman and that he would not release him without an Admiralty order. He would not release him prematurely as he wanted to “make Dennison and his Wife behave decently for the future.” This arrangement was unsatisfactory to Hobhouse and “his friends at the White Lyon.”⁶

“I think it my Duty to acquaint their Lordships how that party shew’d themselves yesterday upon expecting the Return of their Member, Jarrit Smith. They put up a Triumphal Arch with the Arms Proper of the Royal House of Stewart before the Union, which I suppose was well understood by that party, it was taken notice by some of His present Majesty’s good subjects, and I was informed thereof went and saw it with several other people, which when some of the party found, they thought proper to take down and put up in its place the Arms of their Member Mr Smith which had been on the other side of the Arch.”

[Adm 1/1833 (Samuel Graves) 7 April 1756]

38. Proceedings of the Common Council of Bristol, 5, 12 April 1756

5 April 1756: On the motion of Mr. Mayor order’d that a reward of one guinea over and above the Bounty allow’d by his Majesty be given by this House to every able bodied seaman or soldier inhabitant of this City who shall voluntarily enter into his Majestie’s Service on Board any of his Ships of War or enlist in the Honourable Colonel Arabin’s Regiment of Foot, and who shall be duly approv’d of for such Service, on or before the first of May next or during the continuance of his Majestie’s Bounty. And Mr Chamberlain is to issue monies accordingly.

12 April 1756: It is unanimously agreed and order’d that the Reward of One Guinea agreed by order of the last House to be given to every able bodied Seaman who shall voluntarily enter into his Majesty’s Service on Board any of his Ships of War as therein mentioned be augmented to a Reward of Two Guineas and that the same be advertised under the direction of the Mayor and Aldermen or any five of them whereof the Mayor for the time being to be one and Mr Chamberlain is to issue monies accordingly.

[BRO, M/BCC/CCP/1/13, Bristol Common Council Proceedings 1754–1762, pp. 82–3, 86.]

⁶ The White Lyon was the headquarters of the Tory Steadfast Society. The Steadfast society subscribed 50 guineas in 1756 to defend people who were impressed. See *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal*, 20 March 1756, and the Steadfast Society minute book, 16 March 1756, Bristol Record Office, SMV/8/2/4/1. See also P. T. Underdown, “The Parliamentary History of the City of Bristol 1750–1790,” MA thesis (Bristol, 1948), 51–2.

39. Captain Samuel Graves to John Cleveland, 19 April 1756

Bristol, 19th April 1756

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that Yesterday afternoon arrived here the *Devonshire* Tender from Swanzy[Swansea] under the command of Lieutenant Jarvis with 63 imprest men on board, which together with the number I have procured here since the departure of the *Triton* tender to Plymouth and some raised by the *Albany* will be a sufficient Number for him to take round. I have given him orders to make ready the Tender under his command to receive the men, But it will take some time to sweeten her, as she has had the very same fever on Board her (but not so fatal) as now rages on Board the *Albany*, which makes me wish for a fresh Tender to put the men in, lest the Distemper should be carried by them to the fleet.

I have a Letter from Lieutenant Taylor acquainting me that he had raised 25 men, and there is 50 men expected from Gloucester. Therefore, of agreeable to their Lordships, I should think it better to order Lieut. Taylor to Kingroad, and put the men raised there and those at Gloucester on board the Tender under his Command and send them to Plymouth, and keep the *Devonshire* Tender here until the Distemper is quite abated before she is sent around. In the interim shall be obliged to send a surgeon or apothecary to take care of the people, as the Surgeon's Mate now on board her is incapacitated.

[Adm 1/1833 (Samuel Graves) 19 April 1756]

40. Captain Samuel Graves to John Cleveland, 1 May 1756

Bristol 1st May 1756

Sir,

I am Honour'd with yours of the 27th Ultimo with an Extract of a letter from Jarrit Smith Esquire, dated the 25th, setting forth what passed between two friends of his (Gentlemen of Reputation and Fortune) and Capt. Graves. I confess his two friends has told him part of my answer but not all, or He has not thought proper to set forth the Whole that passed. When two gentlemen show'd me a copy of the order I have received the day before which copy you sent to Mr Smith, I told them that[the] order from Mr J. Cleveland was no order to me, but what I had received before, meaning no fresh order. That I had laid the case before their Lordships, and would not discharge Dennison upon that order, nor until I received a particular Order from their Lordships to that purpose. I hope their Lordships will please to observe the Mallice of that representation and do me the justice to think that no Officer can be more ready or desirous to obey or execute their Commands.

Enclosure: Order from the House of Commons, dated 31 March 1756, signed by speaker Onslow, that Samuel Graves to appear at the bar of the House relating to the petition of the gentlemen, clergy and freemen of Bristol regarding an irregular electoral return. To appear 11 May, 9am to give testimony. Graves reported on 2 May 1756 that he had been served with this order by John Brickdale, woollen

draper, and asked the admiralty for directions.[Adm 1/1833 (Samuel Graves) 1, 2 May 1756]

***41. Captain Samuel Graves to John Cleveland, 2 May 1756**

Enclosure: Graves reported on the case of Valentine Ryan, a midshipman on board HM sloop *Albany*, regarding an information made against Ryan by Joseph Orlidge, hooper. Ryan had received orders from the lieutenants to go to Orlidge's house at the head of the Key to impress a man who had been to sea. Joseph Orlidge had only one man working for him in the shop and claimed that he employed no other. He did, however, block the stairs, which made the gang suspect he was concealing someone. Ryan attempted to go up the stairs, and assuring Orlidge that he was not about to steal anything, pushed him aside. He was met at the head of the stairs by Orlidge's wife who "called him Scoundrel, struck him several times and cutt him and one of the Gang with a Brass Shymmer." Midshipman Ryan asked Orlidge to call his wife off, but Orlidge ignored him. So Ryan "struck him a Blow on the Head with a Stick and insisted on his coming down Stairs and going to the House of rendezvous with him." Ryan, however, took the assistant in the shop instead and left Orlidge alone. Ryan was informed by Hugh Dennis, one of the gang, that while this scuffle went on, the man for whom they were searching escaped by the back stairs. Orlidge signed an information with the mayor that Valentine Ryan and Hugh Dennis had assaulted him and his wife.

[Adm 1/1833 (Sam. Graves) 2 May 1756]

42. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 16 March 1756

King Road, Bristol Channel, March 16, 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships I arrived here with his Majestie's ship under my command, and this Evening met with an accident – as the ship Tended, her stern-post & Rudder got foul of a Rock, which with the strength of the Tide has broke the main piece of the Rudder, sprung the Stern-Post and opened the wooden ends in such a Manner that she makes a foot of water in three minutes, & the two Chain Pumps gain but very slowly. I have sent to Bristol for Vessels to take in the Guns, and lighten her, when I intend to have the Opinion of the Carpenters here, and one from the shore, when I shall be more Capable of informing their Lordships what Damages she has received. The Pilots here are intire strangers to there being a Rock here, but Capt. Langdon, who were here in the *Mary Gally*, says the said ship struck on one much in the same place, which carried away part of the Gripe & false Keel. I hope by the next post to be able to give their lordships & you a further account, and am, Sir...John Evans

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans), 16 March 1756]

43. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 19 March 1756*King Road, Prince Edward, March 19 1756*

Sir,

Last Tuesday I acquainted their Lordships of the accident which happen'd to His Majesty's ship under my Command, since which have got the Guns & Powder out, and brought her by the head, and she now makes a Foot Water in Eight minutes, the Carpenters have refus'd giving their Opinion till they examine the Rudder, which is unhung and gone on shore, but thinks it must be very bad under Water, as they find by putting down a Batten the water being so muddy, there is no sending a Man down... the Braces of the Gudgzeens are all started & the Whooden-Ends very open but[I] am in hopes when the weather is more moderate to get her by the Head so much as to stop low enough down to ease the pumps. In the meanwhile if their Lordships approves of it, ... a proper person should be sent from one of the Dockyards to give his opinion.

I likewise beg leave to inform their Lordships of the Badness of the Iron Work allowed for the Pumps. In twenty four Hours we had not a pump hook but was streightend and render'd useless, and had I not at the first of her making so much water sent to Town for twenty hooks to be immediately made,[we] should not been able to have kept her above water, as she gained considerably when we stopt one pump to fix a new Hook, and the Leathers are equally as bad.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 19 March 1756]

44. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 23 March 1756*Prince Edward, Kingroad, Bristol*

March 23rd, 1756

Sir,

Since my last where I acquainted their Lordships we had unhung the Rudder and stopt the leak in the Whooden-Ends, as low as we could reach and then found she made a foot water in Eight Minutes, and since Sunday a foot in a Quarter of an Hour, but that I impute to the Mudd, which is stirr'd up by the Tide, and Lodged in the Leak. The Rudder will be repair'd in two or three days, when it will be hung, and then by bringing those Braces too which we can get at, when the ship is brought by the Head, and securing the outer piece of the stern-post with Hatch barns, the Carpenters are of opinion she may get to Plymouth, tho it is certain she will make more water when out of the Muddy River, and as their is no knowing she is Damaged without seeing the Bottom, humble conceive their Lordships will be pleas'd to order some sloop to attend her, as the Pumps has greatly Fatigued; the ships company being twenty short of complement and upwards of thirty sick, and the rest very indifferent Men, so that I have been oblig'd to have men from the sloop.

I likewise be leave to acquaint their lordships when in the Downs, order'd the Midshipmen and Eight men which was left at the Rendezvous to proceed to Bristol and waite for the ship. When I arriv'd found them with Captain Graves, when I let

them remain till this accident happen'd and till those people which I could trust in the Boat falling sick, Demanded these from the shoar, on which Captain Graves acquainted me it was agreeable to their Lordships' directions to him to co-operate with the Captains commanding any of his Majesties ships here, and if these captains were Junior to him, to require and direct them, but as Captain Graves is on the same service as Captain Parker was, who had only the directions of the Tenders, and at that time their Lordships thought proper all Junior Captains that came here should be under my directions, and as I flatter myself my Service at that time was not disapproved of by their Lordships, having rais'd upwards of Five Hundred good Seamen out of the Homeward bound ships, and upon all occasions assisted both Captain Pritchard and Captain Parker on shoar. Therefore hope their Lordships will be pleas'd these men belonging to me which are with Captain Graves to be return'd as he had a Gang from the sloop before I arrived, and permit me to act as in Captain Parker's time.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 23 March 1756]

45. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 27 March 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, March 27 1756

Sir,

I received yours of ye 23rd inst. acquainting me it was their Lordships' Directions to send a long boat to Capt. Barnsley at Gloucester once a Fortnight to take down the Men procured there, which I shall do next Monday.

I have likewise received yours of ye 22nd Inst. in answer to mine of the 16th inst. with Directions from their Lordships to me to get the Defects of His Majesties[ship] under my Command made good with all possible Dispatch, unless they are found of such a nature as to require a Considerable Repair. In answer to which beg leave to acquaint their Lordships I have caused the Rudder to be repair'd, and have yesterday Hung it & today have got ye ship by the Head as much as I could with safety in order to bring to, the Braces above water, but the outer piece of the Stern post is greatly Shook, & started from the whooden ends above an inch, so that she cannot be repair'd or made fit for service without being Dock't, & a new post put in, all the Expense I have put the Government to could not be avoided, which has been a Vessel to take ye Guns In, one the Powder, and Boats to assist in Carrying the Rudder up & down the River, the Boats belonging to the Ship not being sufficient. The Ship now makes one foot water in a quarter of an hour & do not imagine will make more when the Guns, Powder, & Water is in, as the Damage she has received is so far aft. The false Keel is likewise hurt as ye Buoy Ropes, in new Birthing the Ship has always got foul, and it's the Carpenters opinions she will make more Water when out of this muddy River, as from ye quantity of Mud lodged in her Bottom, they imagine some has been ye means of decreasing the Leak. I shall in all other respects forward the Ship till I receive their Lordships' directions.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 27 March 1756]

46. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 29 March 1756

Kingroad, March 29th 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that agreeable to their Directions to the Navy Board, Mr William Gray, Builders' assistant at Deptford, came here this Evening and has inspected into the Damages of his Majesties ship under my Command, has lately received, and has made a Report of the same to the Navy Board by Express.

I think it necessary to mention for their Lordships' farther information that should it be judged proper to Dock and Repair here, in such Case there must be a ship Hired to take in all the stores, Provisions and Men which cannot be trusted on Shore, which ship must remain at Kingroad till the *Prince Edward* returns from Docking, as all Ships are tow'd from hence to Bristol by Boats constantly employed for that purpose.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 29 March 1756]

47. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 3 April 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, April 3rd, 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships the Long Boat of His Majestie's Ship under my Command returned from Gloucester last Night with Thirty-two Impress'd Men and Volunteers, which was Delivered on board the *Tryton* Tender in Kingroad.

I likewise beg to inform their Lordships that not having received any Orders how to proceed in Regard to his Majesties Ship under my Command being repaired, have not yet taken the Guns and Powder on Board, as the Former are in a Vessel laying at Bristol; and in case it should be judged proper from the report sent to the Navy Board by Mr Gray, Builders' Assistant from Deptford, she should be repaired here, it would be much more convenient to get them out of the Vessel on the Key, where they may lay 'till the ship is ready to receive them. The Powder, the Merchants here Granted leave to put into their Magazine which remains without expense to the Government; But the Vessel which was agreed for at Twenty Pounds to let the Guns and Carriages Continue in her till the time agreed for, which was yesterday, but imagine a few days will make but little Difference, as shall let them be there 'till I receive their Lordships' further Directions.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans), 3 April 1756]

48. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 5 April 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, April 5th 1756

Sir,

I received yours of the second instant acquainting me their Lordships had Directed the Navy Board to cause a Vessel to be Hired for receiving the stores Provisions and Men from the time His Majestie's ship under my Command is Docking, and last Night came an Express from the Commissioners for that purpose, so shall without loss of time get the ship ready to go up the River next spring[tide], where agreeable to their Lordships' Directions, shall employ the Officers and Men to the best Advantage.

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships of the Sickness among the Sea-Men here, The *Albany* having upwards of Forty sick, and near that Number on board his Majesties' ship under my Command, and the Numbers encreasing Daily, makes it necessary to represent the same, that some speedy Method may be taken to redress those Inconveniencies the People are under, for want of proper place to receive them on shore. For notwithstanding the greatest care that can be taken of them on Board, those that are well are Liable to be Infected by the Nausious smells that proceed from the sick. Captain Langden imputes the Sickness among his People to proceed from having no Beds or Slops for the impress Men, for want of which they Contract Colds and Fevers and the Surgeons being Fearfull of Giving them proper Medicines as they have no place to lay warm in, few of them recover. Therefore Judge it proper to inform their Lordships therewith.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 5 April 1756]

49. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 11 April 1756

Prince Edward, King Road, April 11th, 1756

Sir,

I have received yours of the 8th Inst. signifying their Lordships directions to me to purchase Bedding and slops for the press'd Men on board his Majestie's sloop *Albany* till the Navy Board can send a Supply, Therefore bed you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships that their directions shall be complied with without loss of time.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 11 April 1756]

50. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 15 April 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, April 15th, 1756

Sir,

I have received yours of the 10th instant, with the inclosed orders in Council, upon Occasion of the plague having lately broke out in Algiers; I beg you will acquaint their Lordships I shall carefully comply with every part of the said Orders,

I likewise beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships this Day I came up the River with his Majestie's ship under my Command, and on a ship which is now in the Dock coming out, shall go in, if the Weather permits the following day.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans), 15 April 1756]

51. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 16 April 1756*Prince Edward*, Bristol, April 16th, 1756

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships this day His Majestie's ship under my Command was got into the Dock, and the Damages she received in Kingroad is found to be such that she must be repaired here, as I am informed by Mr Gray, Builders' Assistant, the particulars of which he has this Post acquainted the Commissioners of the Navy, and as it's four Months since Clean'd, Humbly conceive their Lordships will approve of her being Graved, which Mr Gray has no order for doing, she was also Tallow'd when last Grav'd, but in my Opinion that will be needless in this Muddy River, as she will be Fitted here sufficiently without going to another Port,

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 16 April 1756]

52. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 12 May 1756*Prince Edward*, Bristol, May 12th, 1756

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships the Night the accident happened to his Majestie's ship under my Command, when it was Requisite for every Officer and Men to be employ'd in New Birthing & Mooring, and at the same time the Pumps kept continually Going, William Balingall, Boatswain of the said ship, was found asleep in his Cabbin, for which Neglect of Duty I suspended him, but as there is no opportunity of bringing him to a Court Martial, and he having apply'd to me for leave to quit the Service, beg to know their Lordships pleasure concerning[this matter].

I further beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that he is but an indifferent Seaman and very unfit for that Station.

If the said Boatswain shall be allowed to quit, Humbly be leave to Recommend William Daggett, Boatswain of his Majesties sloop *Albany*, Captain Langden having given him the Character of a very Diligent good man.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 12 May 1756]

53. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 22 May 1756*Prince Edward*, Kingroad, May 22nd, 1756

Sir,

I here inclose the state and condition of his Majestie's ship under my Command and beg leave to acquaint their Lordships, as I have Ten Men at the Hospital, and Eight Men short of Complement, the want of which must weaken the Guns, as when complete can allow but Seven Men and Boys to the Eighteen Pounders, and when Quarter'd have but Fifteen Men to small arms, and as the Homeward Bound Trade is

not expected this Month, and a Convoy will be ready in a few days, beg to know if their Lordships approve Captain Graves making up the Men I am short, as many of those now on board are but indifferent.

I likewise beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that I received their directions for the Boatswain to quit, but as the warrant for the Boatswain of his Majestie's sloop *Albany* is not yet come down, he still continued on board.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 22 May 1756]

54. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 30 May 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, May 30th, 1756

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that I have given Lieutenant Francis of the *Devonshire* Tender orders to Cruise off Lundy as the Homeward-bound Trade is daily expected.

I have likewise since Captain Graves left Bristol, sent orders to Lieutenant Taylor of the *Two Sisters* Tender now at Bridgewater, to repair to Kingroad, she being mann'd with the *Prince Edward* and *Albany's* Men, and as those men are wanted on board their Respective ships, beg leave to know their Lordships further orders in Regard to that Tender.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 30 May 1756]

55. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 5 June 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, June 5th 1756

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships, agreeable to their directions, I have given orders to Lieutenant Taylor to proceed to Plymouth with the *two Sisters* Tender under his command in order to be paid off. The said Tender has Thirty Impress'd[Men] and Volunteers on board which I have directed the Lieutenant to acquaint the Commanding Officer at that Port therewith.

I have likewise given orders for Lieutenant Sandaland[Sunderland] to proceed to Portsmouth with the *Triton* Tender, he having One Hundred and Twenty Men on Board the said Tender, without loss of time, and the first Favourable Opportunity shall sail with his Majestie's ship under my Command with the Convoy now ready.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 5 June 1756]

56. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 14 June 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, June 14th 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that this Morning about two o'clock some men on board the *Triton* Tender secured the Midshipman of the Watch, Hoisted the boat out, and Sixteen made their Escape...The Master of the said Tender who was Lock'd in the Cabbin, Fired some Musketts out of the Cabbin Window, on which Boats were sent from the *Prince Edward* and *Albany* sloop, but the Men got on shore before they could come up with them and carried with them Eighteen Cutlasses. Mr Sandalands, Lieutenant of the Tender, was not on Board at the Time and the Reason he gives for not being there was his going to Bristol to forward down some Beer, as he had wrote for it, and to no Purpose. I have order'd him not to leave the Tender on any pretence whatever and to sail the first moderate weather. I should likewise have sent the Description of Men, but find none have been taken.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 14 June 1756]

57. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 17 June 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, June 17th, 1756

Sir,

I received yours of the 14th Instant acquainting me it was their Lordships' directions to send Pierre Gilleguennet and the rest of the Crew of the Ship *Vigilant* of Calais which was stranded off the coast of Cornwall Prisoners of War, by the first Frigate or Tender, to Plymouth.

I therefore beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships I have given Lieutenant Taylor of the *Two Sisters* Tender orders to receive them on board and sail with the Tender under his Command, the first opportunity for Plymouth,

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 17 June 1756]

58. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 5 August 1756

Prince Edward, King Road, August 5th 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships I arrived here this day from a Cruize of three weeks, after seeing the Trade from this Port and Cork two Hundred Leagues to the Westward. During the Cruize, spoke with several ships most of which were Danes and Dutch. In my return retook a Merchant ship call'd the *Hobson* from Carolina, who had been taken eight Days before by a French frigate call'd the *Valour* of Twenty-Four Guns, sent with some dispatches from Cape Breton, but was oblig'd to put into the Western Islands for want of Provisions, having but three weeks at whole allowance when they sail'd. The Garrison and ships there being Greatly distressed by their Victuallers being taken. By the account of the Prisoners we Chaced the said Frigate two days before we retook the *Hobson*, and was within two miles of here when Night came on, which being very dark and squally they made their escape. I took out of the retaken ship Nine French[men], two of which

were petty officers, the rest Seamen, and beg to know how their Lordships would have them disposed of.

Here is now a Convoy ready which I shall proceed to sea with, as soon as I have compleated the Beer and Water. Inclos'd have sent my Journal with the state and Condition of his Majestie's Ship under my Command.

[Adm 1/1758 (John Evans) 5 August 1756]

59. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 17 August 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, August 17th 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships that on Sunday last arrived here the *Tryton* Tender, who I have orderd To Cruize off Lundy and Impress Men out of the Homeward Bound ships.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 17 August 1756]

60. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 21 August 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, August 21st 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships the inclosed is a Copy of a Letter I received from Captain Morris concerning John Watkins, who was a deserter from Captain Graves and since his being order'd from this Port have taken up that said John Watkins. Therefore beg leave to acquaint their Lordships with the particulars, His being Press'd by Captain Graves was thus. First he having been at sea, secondly by ap[p]lication of the Inhabitants in General as he is looked upon as a Dangerous Idle Fellow; soon after he was Impress'd he made his escape, on which he went to Town, and got a Protection from Count Haslang, when he return'd here and bid Defiance to me and my Officers; On which I sent an Officer and some men in search of him, which he being acquainted of, Fired a Piece out of a Window at the Officer which Narrowly missed him and some of the men. This happened just on my going out with the last convoy by which means had no opportunity of taking him. On my return from the Cruize had intelligence &c where he was and took him, When I found he had a Protection, but not at that time he made his escape from Captain Graves. Therefore thought I had no right to pay any regard to it without their Lordships' directions.

I have answer'd Captain Morris's letter acquainting him of the particulars I here mention, and therefore thought it proper to inform their Lordships therewith that the said Watkins might not be clear'd after the Insult both myself and officer has met with from him.

I have inclosed the state and Condition of his Majestie's ship under my Command, and agreeable to their Lordships order have sent the Tender to carry Captain Foley to Milford.

Enclosed: to Captain John Evans,

His Excellency Count Haslang, Minister from the Elector of Bavaria and Palatine has just received Information that your Men have pressed John Watkins, who has hired himself to his Excellency for a year, has done Business, and has received wages, and had leave of absence given him to go to Bristol to settle his affairs. I am therefore to acquaint you that his Excellency requests you'll forthwith set the said John Watkins at Liberty, and be pleas'd to Favour me with a line of the Reason of such an Illegal Act that I may make his Excellency easy, who was going to complain to the King for the Insult...

I very sincerely wish you a successful voyage and remain, Sir, your obedient servant, J Morris.

Bolton Street, Piccadilly, 18 August, 1756,

PS I have the Honour to be in the Service. The ambassador is my friend. Lord Harrington & family second his Complaint.

Be pleas'd favour me with your answer the Inclos'd over[the page] The Act of Parliament in Favour[of] Foreign Ministers and their Servants is very Extensive.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 21 August 1756]

61. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 6 September 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, Sept 6th 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships that I saild from hence this day with the Outward-bound Trade. I have likewise given orders to Lieutenant Griffiths of the Dispatch Tender to sail with the Press'd Men he had received from his Majesties Ship under my Command, and the *Devonshire* Tender, to Spithead.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 6 Sept. 1756]

62. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 6 November 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, Nov 6th 1756

Sir,

I beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships I arrived here yesterday with his Majestie's Ship under my Command. Three Days after Leaving the Convoy, fell in with Admiral Holbourn, who gave me an order to put myself under his Command where I continued until the 15th of October when Losing Company in a Gale of Wind, I went to the place of Rendezvous and continued there 'till the 18th Instant agreeable to his Order, when I spoke with Mr Kepple, who put on board me 29 French Prisoners and then made the best of my way for this Post, and in the Latitude of 46 degrees chased a brigantine which proved to be a French Privateer of 8 six pounders, 16 swivels and 73 men. They had taken a ship and a snow, the former belonging to Biddeford, the latter to Cork, after taken the said Brig had excessive

bad weather, so that she sprung a Leak, and made so much Water that the Pumps going Night and Day would hardly keep her free, on the 28th it being more moderate, sent the Carpenter on board who was of Opinion it would be Difficult to get her into Port, if we met with any more bad weather, so took the men out of her and Burnt her. Tomorrow shall send the Prisoners on Shore, one of the Crew is an Irish Man and shipt himself for a Linguister. I shall detain him on board 'till further Directions from their Lordships. Inclosed is the Journal of my Proceedings with the State and Condition of the Ship.

Likewise beg to acquaint their Lordships that with the Number of Sick Men there Generally is on Board, and those we leave at the Hospital, I have no men to small arms, and but seven men to each of the Eighteen Pounders, and likewise that the Ship is much squarer Rigged than any of her Rate, so beg to know if their Lordships will approve of my Compleating to the full Complement of 280, as here is several good men belonging to Bristol would enter was they to continue in the Ship.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 6 Nov 1756]

63. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 24 November 1756

Prince Edward Kingroad, Nov 24th 1756

Sir,

I received yours of the 22 Inst. Directing me to Confine Lieutenant Parry of the *Dispatch* Tender and Cox the Master in order to their being punished according to Law.

In answer to which beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that the said Tender is not here but shall as soon as I can hear of her in this Chan[n]el Cause their Orders to be put in Execution.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 24 Nov. 1756]

64. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 27 November 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, Nov 27th 1756

Sir,

I received yours of the 25th instant directing me on Mr Harris of Stone House in Gloucestershire sending John Rickets a deserter here, to pay the Person who shall bring him the Reward of Twenty shillings. And sixpence for every mile not exceeding Twenty, which I shall take care to do.

I likewise beg leave to acquaint their Lordships the ships which I am to Convoy from this Port to the Westward will not be ready 'till the 23rd of next Month, which time is appointed by the Merchants for Sailing. Therefore humbly beg their Lordships will Indulge with leave to go to London; Having just had an Account of the Death of my Father, and no one present to settle his Affairs, or take care of his Effects.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 27 Nov. 1756]

65. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 15 December 1756

Town, 15 Dec 1756

As the time of my leave is out I am going to Bristol to the Ship I command, which is by desire of the Merchant[s] of that City to sail 23 Inst. with a convoy. Therefore beg you'll be pleased to acquaint their Lordships it is upwards of six months since last Cleaned and generally in want of new cables & other Stores. Humble beg to know if their Lordships may approve of my returning to some Dock Yard after Seeing the Convoy safe in order to be refilled as its very uncertain getting round from Kingroad at this time of the year.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 15 Dec. 1756]

66. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 19 December 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, Dec 19th 1756

Sir,

As his Majestie's Ship under my Command being ready for Sea & only wait[ing] for the Convoy which will be ready in five or six days, And Lieutenant Parry of the *Dispatch* Tender being confin'd on board the said ship. Humbly beg to know their Lordships pleasure concerning him, on my sailing.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 19 Dec. 1756]

67. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 22 December 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad,
Dec 22nd 1756

This day received their Lordships order for Repairing to Plymouth to refit after leaving the Convoy.

I likewise beg leave to acquaint their Lordships I am at present very ill with an Inflammation in my Bowels, and for fear I may not be able to get on board at the time of my sailing which nothing but the risk of Health in the Highest Degree shall hinder me, Humbly beg to know if their Lordships will allow me in that case to give the first Lieutenant an order to proceed with the convoy. He is a Sober, Sedate good Officer, and having known him some years, can answer for his conduct. I hope their Lordships will not take this amiss, as I would by no means have presumed to ask such a Favour on any other account, but the uncertainty of my Health, which I shall hope will permit me to go, as it will be Monday or Tuesday before the ships can be ready.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 22 Dec. 1756]

68. Captain John Evans to John Cleveland, 25 December 1756

Prince Edward, Kingroad, Dec 25th 1756

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint you I have this day received their Lordships' orders and Instructions for Impresssing of Seamen, and have Distributes them to each Lieutenant on board his Majestie's ship under my command, in order to their being put into Execution.

[Adm 1/1578 (John Evans) 25 Dec. 1756]

69. Samuel Sedden, Admiralty Solicitor, to John Cleveland, 10 June 1756

Piccadilly, 10th June 1756

Sir,

In obedience to the Directions of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, signified to me by your Letter of 26th May last to appear for and Defend Lieutenant[Peter] Rawlings, and[Bartholomew] Ryan, in the Prosecution commenced against them in the Court of Kings Bench, and to report from Time to Time what I do therein, I beg leave to acquaint you That on an Application made to the Court of King's Bench the last Day of last Term, the Court was pleas'd to enlarge the time for Mr. Rawlings and Ryan's showing cause why an Information should not be exhibited against them Till the first Day of next term. And I take the Liberty herewith to enclose you Copys of the several Affidavits, upon reading of which, the Court made the Rule upon the said Rawlings and Ryan to shew cause, and as the Affidavits Charge Mr. Rawlings with breaking the windows and forcibly entering into the House of Thomas Dennison, a Butcher and Victualler in Bristol, knocking him down and striking him in the Head with Cutlasses and Bludgeons, and ill Treating his Wife, and Servants, and impressing the said Dennison, and as by the said Affidavits the said Dennison is represented to be a Butcher, free of the Butchers Company of Bristol, and a Considerable Dealer, and no Seafaring Man, having never been at Sea, Except once to North America where he went on family Concerns, and as a Passenger only in a Ship, which Ship in his passage home was in great Distress by bad weather, And the said Dennison on that occasion exerted himself and was very useful in preserving the same Ship, whereupon one of the Owners ...gave him a Gratuity; But that the said Dennison never followed the Sea as an Employment, I humbly submit to their Lordships' Consideration whether or no they would be pleased to order me farther to defend the said Rawlings and Ryan,

I am, Sir, &c Samuel Sedden

[Adm 1/3677 f. 104]

70. Samuel Seddon to John Cleveland, 17 June 1756

Pickadilly, 17th June 1756

Sir,

In Obedience to the Directions of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, signified to me by your letter of 16th instant, The I should reconsider the Case relative to the prosecution commenced against Lieutenant Rawlings and Ryan, at the suit of Thomas Dennison of Bristol, Butcher, on account of pressing him into his Majesty's Service, and give my Opinion what Steps will be the most proper to take therein, I take the Liberty to acquaint you, for their Lordships Information, That I am humbly of Opinion it will be proper that Copes of the several Affidavits...should be sent to the Lieutenant with directions for him to apply to some Attorney at Bristol to examine his witnesses and draw proper Affidavits in answer thereunto, in Order that the same may be made Use of against the prosecutor's Application to have the Rule made absolute for an Information, and for that purpose I have by this post sent such Copies of the Affidavits to Mr. Rawlings, with directions accordingly,

[Adm 1/3677 f. 108]

71. Samuel Seddon to John Cleveland, 7 July 1756

Piccadilly, 7th July 1756

Sir,

...I beg leave to acquaint you That the Court of King Bench has granted an Information against the said Lieutenant Rawlings and Ryan on account of Breaking the Windows and forcibly entering the House of Thomas Dennison...knocking him down, and striking him on the head with Cutlasses and Bludgeons...although he is not a Seafaring Man, and the Council for the said Dennison produced to the Court the said Dennison's discharge by Captain Rodney as not being a Seaman, and having found a Man in his Room, for which Man, it was represented That Dennison was obliged to pay Ten Guineas.

I beg leave to acquaint you that on the 17th June last I sent...to Lieutenant Rawlings at Bristol copies of the several affidavits on which the Court made a Rule for him to show cause why an Information should not be granted against him, and in my letter I advised Mr. Rawlings to apply to some Attorney of Reputation at Bristol to examine his Witnesses and prepare proper Affidavits, ...but I never received any answer from Mr. Rawlings to my said letter,

In consequence of the said Information being granted, Lieutenant Rawlings and Mr. Ryan would be liable to be apprehended and committed upon an attachment unless an Appearance was entered for them, and therefore to prevent such an Inconvenience and the Charges attending it, I have give Directions for an appearance to be entered for them immediately, and as the prosecutors seem to proceed with great Vehemence...I humbly apprehend it will be very proper if their Lordships please to send their orders to Lieutenant Rawlings and Mr. Ryan forthwith to send me a full and particular Account of such evidence as they have or can procure for their Defence...

[Adm 1/3677 f. 113]

***72. Samuel Seddon to Hon. Philip Stephens Esquire, Secretary to the Admiralty**

Piccadilly, 27 March 1765

The Admiralty Solicitor's letter reported that Lieutenant Peter Rawlings and Bartholomew Ryan pleaded not guilty to the information before King's Bench in Trinity term, 1756. "At the Bristol summer assizes of 1757, they were then tried on the information and found guilty on the evidence of said Dennison's wife, who swore That Rawlings and Ryan and the Press Gang, on the 9th of March 1756, about nine o'Clock at Night, came to Dennison's House, knocked at the Door and demanded Admittance, which being refused, with Bludgeons and Cutlasses, they broke the Windows, knock'd down the said Dennison two or three times, and he was very bloody; That they broke open several Closet Doors under pretence of searching for Seamen, That they then took away and impressed Capel Veizy, an Old Servant of Dennison's, upwards of fifty years of age, notwithstanding he had been before impressed and discharged as unserviceable.

The said Mr. Rawling's is now arrested [in Exeter] on an Execution on the said Conviction, and in order to free himself from Exeter Prison where he now is, it is necessary he should find Bail for his appearance in the Court of King's Bench on the first day of next Term, in order to receive and submit himself to the sentence of that Court."

[Adm 1/3678 f. 383]

Margin. 29 March 1765: Ask Graves[Samuel Graves, regulating officer in Bristol] to let their Lordships know what orders he gave to Lieutenant Rawlings relative to the impressing[of] the Man ...

73. An affray at Kingroad, 10 September 1756

On the Arrival of the *Virginia Merchant*, Captain Wright, in the Road, the Tender lying there to impress endeavour'd to take her Hands, who resisting the Tender's Men fired at them, kill'd the Cook, and 'tis said, wounded others. And Yesterday, about three O'Clock in the Afternoon, the *Virginia Merchant* was observ'd to fire several Guns in Distress, and soon after to sink. Some imagine she receiv'd a Shot between Wind and Water from the Tender, but others that she anchor'd in too shallow Water and struck on the Fluke of an Anchor which is thought the Occasion of this unforeseen Accident. Her Cargo is very larger, consisting of near 500 Hogsheads of Tobacco, about 50 Tons of Iron, and several other Things.

[*Whitehall Evening Post*, 11 Sept 1756]

74. Samuel Seddon to John Cleveland, 24 December 1756

Pickadilly, 24th December 1756

Sir,

In obedience to the Directions of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty signified to me by your letter of the 20th instant (enclosing two letters of from Lieutenant Parry late of the *Dispatch* Tender, now in confinement on board his Majesty's Ship the *Prince Edward*, and also several Affidavits concerning the Charge of a Rape, said to have been by him committed on Board the said Tender) to take the whole Affair into Consideration, and report my Opinion what is proper to be done therein, I take the Liberty to acquaint you for their Lordships' Information That I have carefully perused the Informations of the Reverend William Davis of the City of Bristol, clerk, John Llewellyn, Master of the *Thomas and Betty* Sloop, and also of Eleanor Williams, spinster and Mary Davis, the two young women on whom Captain Cox and Lieutenant Parry have been accused of having committed Rapes; and that by the contents of the said Informations, I do not find sufficient Evidence to charge the said Lieutenant Parry with a Rape, or even with an Assault with an intent to Commit a Rape on either of the young women; and I beg leave to observe that by the Supplemental Affidavit of John Else, a Pilot, it appears that at the time of the Misbehaviour charged by the Young Women on the said Captain Cox and Lieutenant Parry, the *Dispatch* Tender was in Caldy Road, which lies in and is part of the County of Pembroke, therefore if any illegal Crime was then done, I humbly apprehend the same is not cognizable at a Sessions of Oyer and Terminer to be held for the Jurisdiction of the Admiralty of England; and on those Circumstances I am humbly of Opinion that their Lordships may very properly, if they please, give Orders for the said Lieutenant Parry's being Released from his present confinement.

PS. Herewith I return the several Papers you were pleased to send me in your Letter.

Margin: An order to release Lt. Parry out of confinement. It appears that what he is accused of was done within the County of Pembroke, therefore not cognizable at an Admiralty Sessions.

[Adm 1/3677, f.149]

75. Captain William Fortescue to John Cleveland, 8 January 1757

Prince Edward, Kingroad,
January ye 8th 1757

Sir,

I arrived here yesterday and took upon me the commands of Her Majesty's Ship *Prince Edward*. The Merchants inform me the Trade will be ready for convoy on Monday the 11th Instant at which time I shall said with them if the wind & weather permits & after seeing them a proper distance into the Sea shall make the best of my way to Plymouth agreeable to their Lordships' Orders of the 20th of December, I am...William Fortescue

[Adm 1/1785 (William Fortescue) 8 Jan. 1757]

76. Captain William Fortescue to John Cleveland, 26 April 1757

Prince Edward, Kingroad, Aprill ye 26th 1757

Sir,

Please to move their Lordships to order a press warrant & instructions to be sent me, as I have none to deliver to the third Lieutenant who is but lately appointed to his Majesty's ship under my command.

[Adm 1/1785 (William Fortescue) 26 April 1757]

77. Captain William Fortescue to John Cleveland, 4 May 1757

Prince Edward Kingroad, May 4th 1757

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships of the following behaviour of the *Tartar* privateer of Bristol. A merchant ship in the Road call'd for assistance to the *Stork* sloop acquainting them the privateers boat boarded them & forcibly enter'd their men armed, threw down the Mate and collerd (collared) him till they took away the chest and bedding of two men that did belong to the said merchant ship but deserted from her & enterd on board of the privateer. Mr Waterfall & Lieut. Of the *Stork* immediately went with a boat to their assistance & met the privateers boat returning to their ship upon which the privateers boats crew took to their arms. In the scuffle they fell along side of the privateer whose people likewise took up arms & opposed the *Stork's* boat.

Coming on board them. My Lieutenant acquainted me the *Stork's* boat was alongside the privateer with cutlasses drawn, I immediately sent boats armed to their assistance & to know the Cause; the Lieutenant of the *Stork* acquainted with me what I have related, I orderd eleven of the privateers men to the pressed as a punishment for such insolent & outrageous behaviour. I thought it my duty to acquaint their Lordships of this affair, & I hope they will approve of what I have done.

Margin from John Cleveland, Secretary to the Admiralty: let him know I have communicated his letter to their Lordships who approve what he has done.

[Adm 1/1785 (William Fortescue) 4 May 1757]

78. Captain William Fortescue to John Cleveland, 9 September 1757

Prince Edward, Hungroad, the 9th Sept. 1757

Sir,

I have recd. your letter of the 5th instant signifying their Lordships' directions to me to order the *Alderney* ship to Plymouth with the *Love and Unity* Tender with prest men and three timber vessels under her convoy, and I

have ordered her to proceed agreeable to their Lordships' orders. I am...Willm. Fortescue⁷

[Adm 1/785 (William Fortescue) 9 Sept. 1757]

79. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 9 May 1758

Antelope in Kingroad, 9th May 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that the Masters of most Vessels belonging to this place, at their arrival in the River make it a Custom to Land their Seamen as soon as they get off Lundy or Ilfracombe, which is the place they are obliged to take in a Pilot who has taken care to have sufficient Landmen with what few Sickly and good for nothing is left on Board to bring the Ship up to this Road.

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships if one of two Sailing Cutters were employ'd on that duty would be the only Effectual Means of prevent their being Landed, as I believe they wou'd be better able to keep the Sea in that narrow Channell that the large Tenders, as it is possible for them to anchor in severall places under the Land, which is not proper for the others to doo, they being no safe Port for them nearer than this Place.

Since I have arrived here severall Vessels have come up to this Road having Landed all their Men except such as I mentioned above and only fitt for the Hospital....

I am, Sir, &c Thomas Saumarez.

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 9 May 1758]

80. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 11 May 1758

Antelope in Kingroad, 11th May 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that last night here arrived the *Britannia* Privateer of this Port, the Master of which informed the Officer whom I sent on Board that his men had refused to obey him & forced him into Port, Delivering him; at the same time a List of the Ringleaders but it being impossible to get them out of the Ship I caused a strict look out to be kept to prevent their getting on Shore. This morning upon seeing her Boat put off full of Men, I sent our Boats Mann'd & Arm'd to Interrupt them, at sight of which the *Britannia* fired at our Boats & has dangerously wounded two of our Men, but we got the Boat on Board with twenty six of them.

⁷ Fortescue's turn of duty at Kingroad was quite intermittent: he did more convoying than impressing and his responsibilities took him to Plymouth Sound, to Guernsey, to Liverpool, and Ireland. In July 1758 he was complaining that his ship's company was "sickly with Fevers & small pox" and he was very short of small beer. "I made the best of my way to Dublin" he dolefully remarked, and then said he would go to the Downs "with the Trade that are ready to accompany me." Adm 1/1795 (William Fortescue) 20 July 1758.

The Officers declin'd firing, being afraid of the consequences that might have attended the Killing any of them. Should be glad their Lordships would please to direct me how I am to proceed in such Cases for the future, being (whilst in this Road) daily liable to this sort of Usage.

Margin: 13 May Direct him to send their names with affidavits of the facts, then the men may be prosecuted.

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 11 May 1758]

81. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 1 July 1758

Antelope, Kingroad, 1st July 1758

Sir,

Please acquaint their Lordships I have seventy nine Imprest and that there are twenty two on Board the *Devonshire* Tender, and as His Majesty's Sloop the *Albany* is waiting to Convoy some Timber Vessels round to Plymouth, which will soon be ready, wou'd be glad to know if it is agreeable to their Lordships to have them sent round in her.

This Evening I received their Lordships' Orders of the 20th June. I sent the Boats up the River and upon Impressing some men, and a great number of Seamen and the Mob of Bristol Arm'd themselves and marched severall places in order to find the Officers or any of the people belonging to His Majesty's Ships, searing they wou'd Murder all of them they shou'd meet with, and haul the Boats up into Town and burn them. Inclos'd is two Letters sent on Board to give Notice of their Interest, which prevented me from sending our Boats to Town, 'till yesterday I received an Account of their being dispersed, but ever since I came on this Station, upon our Boats going up the River, they assemble in large Partys. There is at present upwards of two thousand Seamen in and about Bristol.

Margin: 3rd July, approve his sending the Men as he proposes. The Lords are sorry the people of Bristol behave so badly & desire him to be very vigilant in impressing the men out of the Ships that come into the Channel.

Enclosure: Hotwell, June 26th, 1758

Messrs Mitchell and the Rest of the Gentlemen

Just now have been heare, 4 or 500 Sailors in Pursuit of the Lieutenant of the *Antelope*, Swareing he was in the House, was obliged to shew them every room in the House before I could get rid of them, now hearing you was on board the *Antelope*, took this Freedom to acquaint you, as also Desiring you to come up by Land, for they vow vengeance against the officers of the Man of War, for they will attend the Flood...I am your very Humble Servant, Henry Smith

Enclosure 2: To Captain Saumarez

I have made bold to acquaint you what happen'd this day here, your men having Impress'd some Men this morning Caused a Mob of three or four hundred Men to rise in a Riotous manner & came and search'd my house beating my Beds, Search'd my Closets, Draws and every part of the House in a pretense to find some of your

Officers, which they threaten to use very ill, they told me, if they cou'd have found you they wou'd not abuse you, which I take not beat you, but they wou'd take you Prisoner, which is the occasion of taking upon me to write to you. They threaten to pull my house down this night, but what they will do I can't tell. They are just now gone down to the Hottwells in order to meet your Boats & Swear they will haul them into Ma[r]sh Street & they are Arm'd with Pistols, Cutlasses, Large faggot sticks, Prongs &c.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, Thomas Morgan.

PS They have search'd my house four times since 26th Monday Evening.

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 1 July 1758]

82. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 4 July 1758

Antelope in Kingroad, 4th July 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that as soon as I was informed the four Men taken out of the *Europa* were assistants to the Pilots belonging to Pill, I immediately sent them on Shore. And agreeable to their Lordships' Orders of the first instant, have discharged seven Men that were Impressed belonging to Market boats,

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 4 July 1758]

83. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 21 July 1758

Antelope in Kingroad, 21st July 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships, agreeable to your letter of 3rd Instant, I discharged Eighty-seven Supernumeraries into Her Majesty's Sloop *Albany* and in the *Devonshire* Tender sent twenty two. She Sailed from this place the 19th Instant for Plymouth, with the Timber Vessels under Convoy and having in her passage met with some Homeward bound Merchant Ships, sent severall of those Supernumeraries into the room of some hands who she Prest, Seventeen of which I have now on Board here.

Having received Intelligence of severall Ships being Expected home, I gave Orders to the *Devonshire* Tender to Sail and Cruize off Lundy for a fortnight, which I hope their Lordships will approve of.

I also beg you will acquaint them that Her Majesty's ship under my Command has been near Eight Months out of Dock and her bottom is very foul and bare of Stuff. Inclosed is the State and Condition of His Majesty's Ship.

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 21 July 1758]

84. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 26 July 1758*Antelope* in Kingroad, 26th July 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that yesterday in the afternoon His Majesty's Tender the *Devonshire* was coming up this Channell in Company with another Ship and by a Signal which the *Devonshire* made, we knew they wou'd not permit her to board them in order to Impress their Hands, wherefore I order'd our Boats to goe down to their Assistance but they wou'd not suffer them to goe on Board.

Upon her coming into Kingroad we fir'd at her and when she came within hail, Asked them their reason for not hoisting their Colours and Letting our Boats goe on Board, they then desired we might send them, which was immediately order'd, but upon their going to put along side, they Discharged severall Vollies of Musquet and Swivel Guns, which Kill'd one of the Barge Men and dangerously wounded another. It being then a strong tide of flood, she soon got into the Entrance of the River and came to an Anchor, where it was impossible to do anything with them. She is called the *Nancy* of twenty Guns and Seventy Men, a Letter of Marque from Jamaica, belonging to this Port, Mr Affect, Master.

I also beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that within these three weeks upwards of two hundred Seamen have got on Shore out of the West Indies ships &c coming to this Port.

The Inclosed Letter I received from Lieutenant Burrows. Commander of His Majesty's Tender the *Devonshire*, giving an Account of this Ships behaviour before she came to Kingroad.

Enclosure. *Devonshire* Tender in Kingroad, 26th July 1758

Agreeable to your Order of the 17th Instant I proceded off the Island of Lundy in order to prevent the Men belonging to the Homeward bound Merchant Ships from getting on shore to the Westward. On Monday the 24th Instant came up with the *Nancy* Letter of Marque from Jamaica & brought her to, the Captain of which told me our Boat might come on Board but that we could not take any of their Men. We still kept in Company with her & the next morning was told by the Captain he Men would hoist the Boat out against his Will & that they had got possession of the Arms. I still kept along side of him to prevent their going on shore and so soon as Signalls could be discovered made them for your Assistance. I hope, Sir, as the Above and what followed in Regard to this Ship's Behaviour fell under your Cognizance, you will represent this Affair to their Lordships as no Boat can now with Safety go to Town on his Majesty's Service without the dangers of being cut to pieces as they are flush'd with the success of escaping, even in spite of all our Efforts, they swearing utter Destruction to me and the Tender's People. The whole affair was transacted without the said Merchant ships having shewn any Colours.

Sir, your obedient Servant, Richard Barrow

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 26 July 1758]

85. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 28 October 1758*Antelope* in Kingroad, 28 October 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that His Majesty's Ship *Sphinx*, being order'd round to Plymouth, I sent Seventeen Supernumeraries from His Majesty's Ship under my command, and gave orders to Lieutenant Burrow to Discharge forty seven Imprest Supernumeraries on Board the *Devonshire* Tender into her, to be disposed of as the Commanding Officer at Plymouth thinks proper, which I hope their Lordships will approve of,

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 28 Oct. 1758]

86. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 31 October 1758*Antelope*, Kingroad, October 31st 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that this Morning I received the Inclos'd Intelligence from the Officers of the Custom House of Ilfracombe, and that I am Unmooring Ship in Order to Proceed in Quest of Her, which I hope their Lordships will approve of.

Enclosure: Custom House, Ilfracombe, 30 October 1758

This waits on you, to acquaint you, that we have just now taken the affidavits of Three Seamen who are this Moment landed here, from on board a French Ship of War, now lying in Lundy Road in this Channell in great Distress, having carried away her Foretop Mast, Foretop sail, and greatly in want of Provisions homeward bound from Canada. These People were Prisoners on Board her, being taken on board the *Carnarvon* East Indiaman, homeward bound from China. The Frenchman has taken one of our Pilots on board him, and put these Men on board his Boat, all of which we think necessary to give you immediate advice of for your further consideration, and are, Sir, your most obedient servants,

John Fosse, Thomas Pans

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez), 31 Oct. 1758]

87. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 28 November 1758*Antelope* in Kingroad, 28th November 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that agreeable to their Orders of the 20th instant, I went on board the *Devonshire* Tender and found but five Men belonging to other ships, who I have examined & they declare that they know nothing of the Petition sent to their Lordships & that they never had any reason to Complain of Ill usage

or want of Victuals, but that some of them having been three years & others two on Board the Tender, where they have no Chance of Prize Money, are very desirous to be sent around to their respective Ships that they may have an Opportunity of receiving their Wages. I also examined the Weights complained of, which I found to be Lead ones, and about an Ounce & three Quarters short of our Previous Weights in seven pounds. I therefore order'd them to be thrown over Board and new Brass Weights to be got...

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 28 Nov. 1758]

88. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 13 December 1758

Antelope in Kingroad, 13th December 1758

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that being informed of the sixty gun Ships Arrival in Milford Haven, I order'd the *Devonshire* Tender to repair thither with the Pilots of His Majesty's Ship under my Command in order to bring her round, as I well know the difficulty there in getting carefull Pilots to take charge of so large a Ship in coming up this Channell without a favourable Wind. The Tender sailed from Milford Haven with the *America*, but it coming to blow the night after, parted Company and is not yet arrived...

[Adm 1/2472 (Thomas Saumarez) 13 December 1758]

89. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 5 January 1759

Antelope in Plymouth Sound, 5th January 1759

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that Anthony Scott mentioned in your Letter of the 26th last Month formerly belonged to the *Carnarvon* East India Ship, & was a Prisoner on Board the *Belliqueux* at the time she was taken, but being very ill, was sent on shore the fifth of November to Bristol hospital and is now Discharged. I am an entire stranger to his being an Apprentice or anything further relating to him & therefore can't give their Lordships a more particular Account of him.

[Adm 1/2473 (Thomas Saumarez) 5 Jan. 1759]

90. Captain Thomas Saumarez to John Cleveland, 13 January 1759

Antelope in Plymouth Sound, 13 Jan 1759.

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that Agreeable to their Orders of the fifth instant, I have Discharged Thomas Berwick, who was impressed on Board His Majesty's Ship under my command out of a Ship that came from Newfoundland to

Bristol & have given him a Certificate that he was Discharged by their Lordships' Order,

[Adm 1/2473 (Thomas Saumarez) 13 Jan. 1759]

91. Abraham Elton, Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers, to the Admiralty, 24 April 1758

Merchant Hall, Bristol, April 24th 1758

My Lords,

Captain Saumarez, commander of his Majesty's Ship *Antelope*, having acquainted the Society that he has received orders from Your Lordships to remain with the said Ship & to impress Seamen, I am desired to represent to your Lordships that such orders will deprive the Ships now getting ready of the benefit of his Convoy, & request your Lordships that you would be pleas'd to repeal such Order, & that the said *Antelope* may proceed to sea.

The honour of an answer will oblige, Your Lordships most obedient humble servant,

Abraham Elton, Master

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

92. Henry Casamajor, Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers, to Honorable Robert Nugent, Esquire, MP Bristol, 25 January 1759

Merchants Hall, January 25th, 1759

Sir,

Your very obliging favour of the 20th instant touching the stationing two ships of War at this Port as Convoys to the Trade was this day read at a General Meeting of the Society, whose hearty thanks I am desired to return you for it. They readily embrace the opportunity and beg the favour of you to get it fixed by the Lords of the Admiralty. But with regard to the Ships they fear that the *Antelope* could not be brought up and dock'd at this Port without great risque. They would therefore be glad to have two of the Frigates which carry not more than twenty swivel Guns on the Main Deck as those can be dock'd and clean'd here with safety, and at such times as to prevent our Trade being distressed for want of the Convoys being ready. They apprehend that his Majesty's Bounty to Seamen who voluntarily enter into the Service will be extended to the Men that shall enter on board either of these Ships and that they will be likewise secure from being turn'd over to other Ships, or sent on any other Service without which it will be very heavy Expense on the Port and almost impracticable to get Men to enter voluntarily. They therefore hope you will be so kind as to get these points settled on that Footing,

I am, &c, Henry Casamajor, Master.

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

93. Henry Casamajor to Robert Nugent, MP, 12 February 1759

Merchants Hall, Bristol February 12th 1759

Sir,

I have received your two very obliging Letters of the 6th and 10th instant & am glad the Sentiments of the Merchants of Bristol are so well received.⁸

As Captain Gordon continued here under orders at present to impress seamen but at our request has not yet begun, as we think that a Press would greatly impede the manning of the two ships intended for our Convoys and, as he fears he may incur censure should he make any longer delay, I take the liberty to send you this by Copy to request you to obtain as early as possible the Admiralty's concurrence in form with our Proposal.

We have this day agreed on the form of an Advertisement to be put out if approved of by the Lords of the Admiralty. I send you inclosed a Copy to be laid before their Lordships for that purpose And should it meet their Approbation I apprehend it will greatly facilitate the Service.

We are greatly oblig'd to Captain Gordon for his polite behaviour toward us on this occasion & hope he is enabled by the instructions he will receive to[promote] the Service he may require.

We have this day had our Dock measured and find it will receive a Ship of Thirty Six feet & a half breadth from outside to outside, and if the thirty-two Gun Ships are of that breadth or under, we wish to have two of that force.

I am, &c, Henry Casamajor, Master.

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

94. Henry Casamajor to the Lords of the Admiralty, 22 February 1759

Merchants Hall Bristol, February 22nd 1759

My Lords,

The merchants engaged in the Trade to Newfoundland, having considered the present State of that Trade & how it might be effectually protected & agreeable to your Lordships' kind intentions, have delivered into this Society their Opinion, which they have desired me to communicate to their Lordships.

And with regard to its present State, it labours under two very material Inconveniencys in respect to the Fishermen whose number can never be too great. The first is that they are liable to be impressed into his Majesty's Service. The second that for want of proper Convoys they are too much exposed to the Enemy, which means cooperating together have greatly reduced their number, many of them and several ships having been in the year 1751 taken and carried into France where several died in prison & from whence some are but lately returned. On these accounts Fishermen are become so scarce that the Boatkeepers, and those that fish

⁸ The merchants had been concerned about the number of warships stationed off Bristol to deter enemy privateering. Bristol MP Robert Nugent arranged for the Bristol merchants to finance 2 cruising warships, provided the crews were recruited locally. As a result he gained some relaxation of impressment in Bristol. See P. T. Underdown, "Parliamentary History," 79.

on the Banks, are at a very extravagant expense in carrying on that Trade. And as the Merchants are obliged to advance to great numbers of the Fishermen and Seamen a considerable part of their Wages in order to fit them out with proper Cloathing for such a Voyage, if they are afterwards impressed, the Merchants not only lose in money, but the Voyage is entirely ruined.

The Trade on other accounts likewise stands in need of Convoys, as amongst others, the rate of Insurance would be thereby lessened; and It is humbly apprehended that every thing that could inable the Merchant to carry his Fish to Market cheaper than those of other Nations would be of great advantage to this Nation.

The want of a regular & certain Conveyance of Letters to & from Ireland is another very great Inconvenience that this Trade labours under. Whereas if such a conveyance was established, the Traders to Newfoundland could with certainty give their proper Orders & receive due advices from their Agents & be thereby enabled to make proper Insurance. They wd likewise know whether their ships was taken on their Voyages out and if they were they might send other Ships to take in their Fish which would otherwise be in the Country all the Winter, as was the case in the year 1757, to the great detriment of several Merchants, for, since the War, all the Letters have come from the Island very irregular, as they have been oblig'd to be sent by the way of Portugal, Spain, New York, Philadelphia or Boston, & often times they have lately miscarried.

To remedy the foregoing Inconveniences & to give proper Encouragement to a Trade which would prove so signal an advantage to this Kingdom by employing such a great Number of Ships & Men as it might be brought to do & perhaps make up for the ill success attending some other Branches of the Fishing Trade, it is humbly proposed

That the Men employed in the Newfoundland Fishery as well as those of Ireland as England, should have protections granted them in like manner as those have who serve in the Greenland Fishery.

That a ship of war should be ready annually at Spithead by the 10th of March to take under her convoy the early ships that are bound out to Fish on the Banks of Newfoundland, And that she should stop in Torbay likewise to take under her Protection all other Ships that shall be bound out for that purpose from Lyme, Exeter, Tingsmouth[Teignmouth] Dartmouth & ports adjacent.

That another Ship of War should be ready armed at Spithead by the 10th of April to take under her Convoy the Ships which carry the Fisher Men who are employ'd in Boats on the Shore & Fishery, and that she should likewise stop in Torbay for the same purpose as the former.

I am, Sir, &c Henry Casamajor, Master.

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

95. Henry Casmajor, Master, to the Lords of the Admiralty, 18 April 1759

Merchants Hall, Bristol, April 18th 1759

My Lords,

Ever since this Society received your Lordships' resolutions touching the two Ships of War intended for convoys to the Trade of this Port, their utmost endeavours

have been used to obtain a sufficient number of able men to man them, & near two hundred have at a very considerable expense been shipped. Many more would have been obtained but for the vigilance used by the Civil Magistrates to pick up all the Seamen for the publick Service which was at last considered by the Seamen as a Press & they got into their hiding places & the vigorous actual Press which succeeded drove all the Seamen who could escape out of the Town, and amongst them Sixty Eight of those whom we had engaged, & those very good ones; to these circumstances are added two others which lay us at present under great difficultys & those are, that from the slender complement of men required on board the *Aldbrough* in proportion to the Ship, none but the best of Men are fit for her, & the order which your Lordships have sent to Captain Penny for discharging his Marines.

We are sorry to acquaint your Lordships that the number of men engaged by us & whom Captain Penny thinks fit for his ship are not sufficient to man her without the Marines continuing for the present. And we therefore beg the favour of your Lordships that you would be pleased to indulge us with a continuation of the Marines on board the *Albrough* until we can raise such Men to supply their place as Captain Penny shall approve.

We beg leave to assure your Lordships that no pains of Expense has been or shall be spared by us to fulfill our Engagements, & we hope and believe that when the present immediate call for the Publick shall be answered, we shall not fail in doing it,

I have the honor to be, &c Henry Casamajor, Master

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

96. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 11 January 1759

Bristol, 11 January 1759

Sir,

Be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that I applied to the Mayor and Corporation for their assistance...I have met with a Polite reception and a promise to exert their Power for His Majesty's Service. They seem to think the best Method to succeed, if it could be obtain'd, would be to have a number of men from any of his Majesty's Ships... to be in King Road, unsupported by their Constables, to execute their Lordships' orders before the Pressing design is known.

As soon as the Lieutenants arrive and their Gangs are rais'd, I shall proceed to use my utmost endeavours for the good of the service. I am...Thomas Gordon.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 11 Jan. 1759]

97. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 25 January 1756

Bristol, 25th January 1759

Sir, ...I can't help regretting that the Lieutenants are not as yet appeared as from the Populousness of the Fair...we might have expected a number of Landmen Volunteers.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 25 Jan. 1756]

98. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 27 January 1756

Bristol, January 27th 1759

Lieutenants McKinley, Hammish &c arrived her last Night from Plymouth. I waited this morning upon the Mayor and Corporation who have repeated their desire to assist, but withal desired I might suggest to their Lordships that as Mr. Newgent[Nugent] their present Member[of Parliament] had proposed their manning of Two of His Majesty's Ships to protect their Trade, it would be impossible for the Corporation to comply with that proposal if a Press was immediately begun. Notwithstanding I shall use my endeavours to raise proper Gangs to enable the officers to make head against the Number of Seamen whose residence is in the Heart of the City, and by which they can easily assemble in large Bodys. A Tender or two will be much wanted.

Margin. 30 January The Lords approve of his caution as the Corporation have not yet confirmed Mr. Nugent's proposal.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 27 Jan. 1759]

99. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 1 February 1759

Bristol, 1st February 1759

Yesterday we began to beat up for Voluntiers on which upwards of three hundred Seaman gathered in a riotous manner, almost killed a person whom they thought belonged to us, wounded the drummer & destroyed the drum threatening Death and Distruction of the officers, searching for them everywhere. However I am of clear opinion, if we were well supported, Five Hundred Men may be procured.

By a Letter to the Merchants from Mr Nugent you will have heard from him confirming his proposal to man Two of His Majesty's Ships. I have near thirty stout men offered to enter into our press gangs, but the seeming resolution of the Seamen not to be imprest has made most of them decline. The Mayor assures me the Prisons are full, and that there is no place to be got to secure Imprest Men.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 1 Feb. 1759]

100. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 3 February 1759

Bristol, 3rd February 1759

Please to acquaint their Lordships I have visited the City Gaol, where I saw many seamen confined for debt. I was informed some were Deserters who were ready to acknowledge themselves as such, provided they had the security of a Pardon. Others for Debts from three pounds...I imagine in the Whole about thirty Men.

Lieutenant Burrows of the *Devonshire* Tender arrived yesterday. He informs me that he had wrote to you about the State and Condition of Her, which I refer you to. I shall order him to put himself under my Command.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 3 Feb. 1759]

101. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 3 February 1759

Bristol, 3rd February 1759

By the Inclosed printed papers I imagine that the Merchants of this City have their Lordships leave to raise Men for the Two Ships, ordered to protect their Trade; and as the Seamen have a Surity of the Bounty being paid here, their Landlords will oblige them to enter with the Merchants, which will greatly hinder our procuring Volunteers. Whatever orders the Merchants may have Received from their Lordships, they have thought it proper not to communicate them with me.

By your letter of the 14th February I was to expect their Lordships' Orders how to proceed. I wait their Lordships Directions accordingly. To prevent any Delay I waited on the Mayor and Corporation to back the Press Warrants which they did most politely, and withal seemed extremely anxious that we might succeed, and after many things proposed they determined to write a Letter to Lord Barrington a copy of which you have inclosed.

Enclosure: Bristol, 3rd February 1759 Letter to Lord Barrington

My Lord, The Regulating Captain having applied to us to back the Warrants for Impressing Seamen in this City for his Majesty's service in the present exigency, we have fully done our duty, but as there are great Numbers of Seamen who keep themselves armed, we despair of any safe and successful Execution of this Necessary Measure without a further aid of Military Force, which is also the opinion of Captain Gordon, the Regulating Captain, and in our Judgment Two Troops or Companys of Dragoons in support of as many of the Invalids as can be speared[sic] from their present Duty, will be sufficient for this purpose and give due Encouragement to the Peace Officers to exert themselves, which they cannot be expected to do at the Manifest Hazard of their Lives. We apprehend Captain Gordon will Write to the Lords of the Admiralty To the Like Purpose. We are, My Lord, your Lordships obliged and most obedient servants, Henry Muggleworth, John Fry, B. Wilks, D. Peloquin, Abraham Elton.

Printed pass: To all Press-Masters, Constables and Officers, appointed to raise Seamen for his Majesty's Service

Bristol The Bearer[Blank] has entered voluntarily to serve on board his Majesty's Frigates, appointed to convoy the Trade of this Port, and has leave given to him to the[Blank] to go about his lawful Occasions, during which Times you shall not impress him, provided his Description and Age to be indors'd on the Bank of this.

Margin: 7 March Let him know what their Lordships have done with regard to the Ships that are to be sent to Bristol, and that it is their direction he should impress men as usual so soon as he has everything in readiness for it. But the Lords recommend it to him to see that there is not any Ill use made of the protections granted to Ships that are to be in their Station which must be signed by their respective Captains after their arrival there.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 3 Feb. 1759]

***102. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 3, 11 February 1759**

The Corporation was not prepared to back Gordon until they had had assurances from the Admiralty regarding the manning of two convoy ships. It is clear that Gordon went along with this: he did not approach the corporation again until Nugent had negotiated the terms for the manning of the two vessels.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 3, 11 Feb 1759]

103. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 17 February 1759

Bristol, 17th February 1759

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that I have received your Letter in regard to the Seamen confined for Debt in this City's Prison. As soon as I shall have a particular account from the Sheriff, I shall transmit this to you. I beg leave to mention that I am informed those who can be proved to be deserters from his Majesty's Navy may be claimed by their Lordships if [their Debts are] under the Sum of Twenty Pounds. I have sent Twelve Voluntiers on board the *Devonshire* Tender to keep them together, till the Mayor and Magistrates shall think fit to lend me their Assistance to begin the Impress.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 17 Feb. 1759]

104. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 21 February 1759

Bristol, 21 February 1759

Sir,

Lieutenant Burrows of the *Devonshire* Tender having acquainted me of the want he was in of a proper guard to take care of any men who should be sent to him, I have ordered a Master's Mate and Seventeen Men who are just arrived here from His Majesty's Ship *Montague*, in lieu of prest men, to remain on board the Tender, as they are supernumeraries belonging to may ships. I was unwilling to permit them ashore here.

Enclosed are two lists of the deserters and debtors confined in the City Goal[Gaol] as many of the Debts are large, in all probability we may be able to compromise them. The Gaoler who has been very serviceable in finding out those that were Deserters, humbly intreats their Lordships will not let him be a Looser[Loser] by them.

*Gist of enclosure: Gordon listed 43 men confined for debt in Bristol jail, all but five under £20. Many had been to sea for 5 years or more, three 20 years or more. Gordon also listed the plaintiffs' names and where they had filed two actions against the debtor.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 21 Feb. 1759]

105. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 5 March 1759

Bristol, 5th March 1759

Sir,

I have this day visited the Goal and I have found that Two of those whose Debts their Lordships have order'd me to pay are Deserters, inclosed are their names. Many Landlords of the Deserters have offered to pay their fines and release them. The Mayor has promis'd an order of Detainer which will oblige me to pay sixpence a day Subsistence till they are sent on board. I hope their Lordships will approve of it.

Inclosed in Lieut. Burrows of the *Devonshire* Tender's weekly account, who acquainted me that on the receiving of the men from the Goal, he will have as many as he can Stow; if he could be ordered to Milford Haven, he could put them on board any of His Majesty's Ships there, for a speedy return will be of great Service as there is no doing without a Tender. Some other vessel will be wanting for the reception of Imprest Men in case of Success. In case of an Impress, I must beg leave to take out of the Tender a sufficient Number of Voluntiers to compose the Impress.

I am informed by many Crimps, Landlords that Numbers of Able Seamen would enter if the Bounty was to be paid them at this Port; and also if their Lordships would empower me to go as far as Three pounds to pay the Debt of any able seaman arrested here, I might thereby raise more men.

Margin: 7 March. Approved. Order the tender to Milford Haven with the men and put them aboard the Vernon or any other ship.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 5 March 1759]

106. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 12 March 1759

Bristol, 12th March 1759

Sir, I have received their Lordships' Letters of the 8th instant in regard to their Men on board the *Devonshire* Tender sent from the *Montague* in lieu of pressed men. In my letter of 21st February I mentioned the distress Lieutenant Burrows was in for want of a proper guard to take care of any men sent on board Her, and detained three men for that purpose. In your letter of 28th February 'twas approved of, and as the Tender will sail for Milford if Weather permits, tomorrow night with upwards of one hundred new rais'd men & Deserters, I cannot think it proper to send her away without those I must also acquaint their Lordships that the Master's mate of the *Montague* went away and took one man with him, tho' he had my orders to repair on board the Tender.

I attended the Mayor & Sheriffs at the Guild Hall this day, and after many debates by Council, they have ordered the discharge of Twenty Four Deserters from the gaol who I shall send on board the Tender tomorrow. I beg to mention that the Mayor & Corporation shewed in this effort a great Zeal for the service.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 12 March 1759]

107. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 15 March 1759

Council Chamber

Bristol, 9 o'clock March 15th 1759

The Mayor and Corporation having required by attendance twice this day to communicate an Order from ye Privy Council, and to consult the best means to procure Men for ye Service. On their finding that ye Commanding Officer of ye Invalids had no particular authority to assist an Impress, and no Soldiers to suppress any Insurrection might appear from ye numbers of seamen who constantly go arm'd with swords and cutlasses, and their being no Man of War or Tender here to receive the Men, if we were successful, they are now preparing an express to you which gives me only time to acquaint you that ye *Devonshire* Tender will sail as soon as the weather moderates, with about 100 new raised men.

*Margin: Note from Cleveland suggests that Lord Barrington was party to recruitments drives in Bristol and that Gordon should be reassured about mercantile cooperation in the port. "let Capt Gordon know ...that the Laudable Zeal of the worthy Merchants of Bristol in endeavouring to raise Men for His Majesty's Fleet gives the Lords the highest Satisfaction."

Enclosure:

My Lords,

We having this Day receiv'd an Order from his Majesty's Privy Council signifying to us His Majesty's express commands to cause search to be made in the most diligent and effectual manner in every port within our Jurisdiction for all Seamen and Seafaring Men fit to serve in His Majesty's Ships that shall be found lurking, or concealed here, and to cause them to be seized and taken up by the Constables, or other proper Officers, and deliver them to a Sea Officer employ'd in raising men on Shore, or to the Commander of any Sloop or Tender belonging to His Majesty at Bristol.

We assure Your Lordships that we shall most cheerfully obey, and use the utmost Care and Diligence in our Power to carry His Majesty's Commands into execution, But we beg leave to represent to Your Lordships The great Difficulty and Hazard in executing the same, as Things are now circumstanced in this place. We have back'd Captain Gordon's Impressing Warrants, and given him all the Countenance and Assistance which has the least Tendency to forward the Service he is upon, which we shall not readily continue to do. However, as there are such Numbers of Seamen here, who keep themselves arm'd to oppose an Impress, and Captain Gordon's Tender has already as many men on board as it can conveniently receive, and as there is no other Ship or Vessel whatsoever not in this Port belonging to His Majesty to receive them, we despair of carrying His Majesty's Commands into Execution with the desired effect, or with any reasonable prospects of preserving the peace and security of this large and populous City without the further Aid of a Military Force, and unless the Commanding Officer of the few Invalids here now fit for duty have the proper authority for giving all the Assistance ...for the effectual executing of this Service.

Your Lordships may be assured that none of His Majesty's Subjects have a greater Regard or will exert a more Hearty Zeal and Resolution for His Majesty's Service on

this and ever other occasion than, My Lords,

Your Lordships' most obedient Servants,

Henry Muggleworth mayor, John Foy, B Weekes, J D Peloquin, Abraham Elton,
Morgan Smith.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 15 March 1759]

108. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 20 March 1759

Bristol, 20 March 1759

I am this moment informed that many men have deserted from the *Duke* and as in all probability they will pass through Wells to this City, I shall set out immediately ...to endeavour to get the Mayor and the Commanding Officer of the Regiment Quarter'd there to take up all Strag[g]ling Seamen

As I have Ten Men in Bridewell which is a cold and dismal place, I have ordered each a Bed, and to be removed into an Apartment with a Fire, for which I am to pay half-price, three pence per man per day. I hope their Lordships will approve of it, as the continuing them for any time in the former place might have endangered their lives.

I am uneasie the weather prevents the Tender from sailing as I may lose many men for want of Her. In case there should be no man of war at Milford, I have ordered her to Plymouth. I have directed Lieut. Burrows to put the *Montague's* Men on board the *Venus*, to be carried to their Ship, they having no Cloaths or bedding and not to be trusted in the Tender, He informs me that their Lordships have ordered him a Serjeant and a Party of Marines. I should be glad they were sent by Land, which may be done in six days.

Margin: 22 March. Own their Lordships approve of what he has done. Order the Marines to march by land to Bristol. Let him know.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 20 March 1759]

109. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, early April 1759

Bristol, April (before 7th) 1759

Sir,

On Sunday evening the seaman assembled in a Riotous Body searching for me, the Officers & Men, Vowing Destruction to Us, and bidding defiance to the Magistrates, and as we had no Reason to expect a proper Assistance from them, I was determined on Monday evening, rather than shamefully Abandon the City, to collect what few we had. I have therefore Ordered Lieut. Gaborian of the Caesar tender to join us with what men he could spare. As soon as we gathered together about 50 men, We made a Vigorous Effort, and tho' we were first Receiv'd with Vollies of small Shot, all Places were Deserted. No accident has happened. We are just returned to Town after searching about Thirty Miles in the Country, and so fatigued that I cannot add more

than to assure their Lordships that Lieutenant's Hammish, Field & Gaborian have exerted themselves. We have upwards of a Hundred Good Seamen to send away in the *Caesar*. I wish we had another Tender.

Margin: their Lordships are very well pleased with his Conduct and will endeavour to send him another Tender. Recommend it to Sir Charles Hardy to send Tender if one can be found for Bristol.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) early April 1759]

110. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 7 April 1759

Bristol 7th April 1759

Sir,

I have been much employed in Regulating the Raised Men and carrying them on board the *Caesar* Tender, and not as yet able to send a Distinct list. I can assure their Lordships there are now on board of her 100 men, the major part Compleat Seamen, and but four Landsmen in the Whole. I have likewise Twenty Five excellent Fellows confin'd in Bridewell and if another Tender had been here to be assisted me with Her Men, it would have been no great difficulty to have filled her also. A day or two after the seamen were dispersed, the Magistrates assisted me with their Constables, which enabled me to get a few more than otherwise I should have done, and the officer of the Tender with his People obliged to stay on board to guard them. 'Twould be of service to Hire Men for Gangs, as I lost many Volunteers by keeping them on shore.

A Detachment of Colonel Brown's Regiment is arrived Here. The Corporation is of Opinion, as the most part of the seamen are generally secreted without the Libertys of this City in the Countys of Gloucestershire and Somersetshire, that it will be necessary for the Officers of the Regiment to have Orders to follow the Directions of the Magistrates of those Countys.

Col. Browne has just sent me from Gloucester Twenty one raised People, whom I have ordered on board the *Hazard* Cutter, to be sent to the *Speedwell* Sloop at Illford Comb[Ilfracombe], a Prison being much wanted.

Margin: own receipt and direct him to hire men for Gangs. The Lords leave it to Lord Barrington's consideration whether it would not be proper to give such directions to the Officers of the Regiment, & if so, they desire he will please to do it.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 7 April 1759]

111. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 22 April 1759

Bristol, 22nd April 1759

The *Devonshire* Tender arrived Here Yesterday. As soon as I hear from Capt. Brown, I shall send Her to Plymouth, having now more Imprest Men that she can conveniently take. The officer of the said Tender acquaints me that the Captains

appointed by Sir Charles Hardy to superintend the Raised Men sent to Plymouth, refused to give certificates of the Seamen & Landmen impressed by the lieutenants under my Command, imagining they had indemnity for so doing. The Lieutenants Pray their Lordships to Cause proper officers to give Certificates of the Men received.

A few good Carteel⁹[Cartel] Men having entered with me, who were very naked, I have stopt, and taken them into the Gangs. I hope their Lordships will approve thereof. I shall be glad to know if His Majesty's Bounty is continued to Volunteer Carteel Men, and what they are. From the length of time the Tender may be going and coming from Plymouth, the service in the interim will be much retarded, from the want of one in Kingroad. I therefore intreat their Lordships will order Lieutenant Gaborian in the *Caesar* Tender to proceed here, as He was very serviceable to me; and also that the Captains of the Men of War may have directions to send their Boats to carry the Men on Board as its not only the loss of a Day, but the great fatigue to our Officers and Men, and attended with a great Expense.

Margin: Send Sir Charles Hardy some of the Printed Regulations on this subject, with Directions, to order the officers to conform thereunto.

[1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 22 April 1759]

***112. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 1 May 1759**

One of Gordon's lieutenants, Stephen Hammish, was ill from the fatigue of the press and was spitting "a vast Quantity of Blood." Gordon asked for two more lieutenants "as the largeness of the City and the Seamen being secreted in the Country, require at least Three Officers."

Margin: "Own receipt & to give Lt. Hammish leave to attend to his Recovery. Will have 2 Lieuts. Sent to him, as soon as they can be had."

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 1 May 1759]

113. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 6 May 1759

Bristol 6th May 1759

Please to acquaint their Lordships that I discharged from the rendezvous into His Majesty's Ship *Aldborough* 60 raised men and 40 into the *Devonshire* Tender. Captain Penny acquaints me he has one sick on board and 5 drowned, the rest are sent to the *Devonshire*. The Lieutenants Pray their Lordships that Capt. Penny may be directed to give a Certificate for the Six men as they were all Prime Seamen. The *Devonshire* sails as soon as the Wind permits with 94 men.

I should be glad to know if the Men whose Debts are not above three pounds which I am directed by their Lordships to pay and charge against their Wages are

⁹ A "cartel" was a ship used to negotiate with the enemy in time of war and exchange prisoners.

entitled to His Majesty's Bounty. Inclosed is a letter I received from Mr Griffith Williams.

PS Lieut. Gaborian in the *Caesar* Tender is just arrived.

Margin. Direct Capt Penny to give such certificate. Let him know to be allowed the Bounty as the Debt is charged against their Wages. Sir Charles Hardy to order three Marines to be borne for the *Duke* for Wages & lent to the Tender and to do the like by others in the same circumstances.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 6 May 1759]

114. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 10 May 1759

Bristol, 10th May 1759

Sir,

Lieutenant Field having an Information of some seamen a few miles out of the City, collected the Gangs and sent them in an advanced party under Mr. Cornelius Harris while he was gathering the remainder. Harris soon took seven and left them under the care of an equal number and with a few pursued and took three more, but to his Surprise was surrounded with Thirty Men armed with Pistols & Cutlasses who barbarously fell on him, fractured his Scull and wounded him so much, that Surgeons despair of his Recovery. This Mr. Harris was a person who had been some time in the Navy, and being well acquainted in the City, both Loved and feared, I desired his attendance in the Gang, being a brave, sober and discreet man. The Lieutenant soon came on but could not find the Men, and luckily he did not, so his people were not Properly Armed for their Reception. I made the next morning an application to the Mayor for search warrants to apprehend the men. During the time the Constables were collecting, our men found that some of them were secreted in a house in Marsh Street, which we surrounded. Fourteen of them armed with Pistols and Cutlasses attempted to force their way through our men but they were repulsed. They then fired on ye Gang by which a woman was wounded in the neck. On the Sheriffs coming up, we searched the House but most of them had escaped over the Tops of the Houses, but searching an uninhabited House adjoining, Two of our Men going into a Room were shot at by One of Three who was secreted there. William King, one of my People, to save his life was obliged to fire his Pistol, by which he killed one on the Spot, and took the others. The Coroner's Inquest brought in selfdefence. The Magistrates have them with two others, which we also took in Custody, 'till Harris's fate is known. We have in both the Frays seven wounded, but none in great danger. I must beg leave to inform their Lordships as the seamen are in general well armed, and secured in Houses, we have been very fortunate to escape so long, as we have had many Broyles. I shall use my time to Carry on this Disagreeable Part of ye Service with as little Disturbance to the City as Possible.

I have ordered Lieut. Gaborian with Ten men from the *Caesar* Tender to attend ye Impress ashore. I should be glad if two lieutenants were arrived here.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 10 May 1759]

115. The torture and death of Cornelius Harris, press ganger, 8 May 1759

Bristol, May 12. Information having been given of some Seamen who had concealed themselves in a Publick-House near Ashton, on Tuesday Night last a Party of the Men of War's Crew, headed by the noted Cornelius Harris, went in quest of them. But the Privateers People being upwards of thirty in Number, and well armed, the Press-Gang (consisting of five Persons only) were not able to contend with them, and immediately endeavoured to save themselves by Flight, which they all happily effected except the unfortunate Mr. Harris, who, though he begged for Mercy was treated with the most cruel and inhuman Barbarity. Several of those Savage Ruffians fell on him with their Cutlasses and mangled his Head, Arms and Hands in a Manner too shocking to relate. And having fractured his Skull, chopped off some of his Fingers &c. They basely stamped on and kicked his Body, and then threw it into the Common Road; here he would soon have expired had not a Person met with and carried him into a Publick House where a Surgeon was sent for and his Wounds dressed. He is now in a fair Way of Recovery. One of the Sailors was afterwards accidentally Shot in the Leg by some of his Comrades.

The next Day about five of the same Fellows being in a House in Marsh Street, were surrounded by the Press Gang, but the Sailors getting on the Roof of the House, discharged their Pieces at them, which was returned by one of the Gang, whereby he unfortunately wounded the Mistress of the House in the Neck. The Privateer's Men fired several Times after this, but having killed one of their own Party, the rest quietly surrendered.

[*London Evening Post*, 12–15 May 1759]

116. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 21 May 1759

Bristol, 21st May 1759

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that Cornelius Harris, the Person I mentioned in my Letter of the 10th instant, who was barbarously wounded, is since dead. The Magistrates of this City have in custody five of the seamen who were concerned in the inhumane murder. I hope their Lordships will cause this affair to be fully enquired into least the seamen here may murder with impunity and Considering they are armed & Houses it is surprising we escaped so well. I must beg leave to repeat that Mr. Harris under the Direction of the Officers was a most useful man and by his well knowing the City had procured a great number of men. He has left behind him a wife and four small Children destitute. As he could not be moved from the place he was first carried to, there is an expense of surgeons...which must throw the Poor Woman into Goal. If their Lordships should think proper, I will collect the account and transmit it to them.

Margin: 25 May Direct him to pay the expenses, preserve charges, and charge it to his imprest account. Acquaint the Solicitor of the Admiralty with the whole transaction. Then he may carry on the prosecution. Direct Mr. Seddon to do it.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thos Gordon) 21 May 1759]

***117. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 22 May 1759**

Bristol, 22nd May 1759

Gordon reported that he had been threatened with prosecution for impressing people who had been privateering, but had left the sea and returned to their former occupations on shore. He said they had procured nearly 100 of them in this manner and would likely get more. He asked for directions. He also complained that seaman between Ilfracombe and the King Road were hiding in people's houses. "I have Consulted with Persons who are acquainted with Shipping and its their Opinion that a Cutter with a diligent Officer properly stationed as above my prevent their Landing and our ships or Tenders may press them in Kingroad. The *Caesar* tender may soon sail and carry away Lieutenant Gaborian. I shall be at a great loss for an officer & Petty Officer. I hope their Lordships will forward[send] the Lieutenants down[there], and if possible some good petty officers with authority to raise persons properly qualified for mates or midshipmen. The merchants Here having offered a Premium to seamen to go in the *Alarm*, I cannot reasonably expect they will enter with me.

Margin: Their Lordships approve his impressing the men he mentions and will defend him in case any action should be brought. Approve also of his having a cutter in the station he proposes and to hire an appropriate one for the purpose."

[Adm 1/1834 (Thos Gordon) 22 May 1759]

118. Escaping the tender in Kingroad, 23 May 1759

Bristol, May 26. Wednesday morning upwards of 40 men found means to escape in the King's yall[yawl] from on board one of our tenders in King road.

[*Read's Weekly Journal*, 2 June 1759.]

119. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 31 May 1759

Bristol, 31st May 1759

Sir,

An officer in Colonel Stroud's Regiment, having branded John Crompton (an able seaman whom I had Impress'd) as a deserter, I deliver'd him up. He then acknowledged himself as a deserter also in the year 1757, from the *Chichester*, Capt. Willett. As the Regiment is nearly Twenty Miles from hence, I had him confin'd in Newgate. The Affair could be lodged before the Commanding Officer of the Regiment. The Soldiers have carried him away to the Regiment notwithstanding my representing the irregularity of such as Act. He has been at Sea upwards of Seventeen Years, the major part in the Navy.

Margin: 2 June, Lord Barrington desires he will please to order the man released, being a thorough seaman and deserter from the navy. Direct Capt. Gordon not to deliver any for the future till he has acquainted the Lords with it.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 31 May 1759]

120. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 2 June 1759

Bristol 2nd June 1759

Sir,

I had their Lordships' leave to hire a Vessel to Impress Men between Illfordcomb[Ilfracombe] and Kingsroad where the Seamen are generally landed, but as there was no mention of Men for Her, I must beg leave to say that I cannot even procure trusty men sufficient for Gangs. I therefore desire to have the Liberty to hire a proper Vessel, and of some force, which can sail Well and draw little Water, the merchants to find about twenty-five men (without some Men could be sent from His Majesty's Ships) and withal to have a small detachment of Marines to go in Her. It's my opinion more men could be raised by this method than can be at first thought of. There are, by the Merchants' Account, expected in a few days many ships in this Port, which makes me anxious to have a vessel as soon as possible, and beg that a good officer may be sent for Her.

I informed their Lordships in my Letter of the 10th May that on Lieutenant Hammish's absence, and[as] the seamen collected in Riotous Bodys, I have ordered Lieutenant Gaborian from the *Caesar* Tender till the Lieutenants arrive, and indeed Lieutenant Field, the only officer I have here, has been much indisposed by the constant fatigue he has undergone through the seamen being secreted in the country; and Lieutenant Gaborian has been much hurt by a fall which has obliged me to do double Duty.

The Seamen who form my gangs have petitioned me to desire they may have Five Pounds Bounty as they at first so cheerfully entered. I promised them I would acquaint their Lordships with their Request.

The *Caesar* Tender will sail in a few days with upwards of one hundred Raised Men,

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 2 June 1759]

121. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 9 June 1759

9th June 1759

I have impress Nineteen Men from the *Duke* Privateer. I hope their Lordships will approve of it.

As the Jamaica Fleet is daily expected I have ordered the *Reeves*, *Caesar* and *Terrell* Tenders to Cruize in the Channell to Intercept them, and as soon as the *Devonshire* is arrived to replace the said Tenders, I shall send away to Plymouth the *Reeves* and *Caesar* with near Two Hundred Raised Man.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 9 June 1759]

***122. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, c. 11–15 June 1759**

In an undated June letter, Gordon asked whether he should impress the Pill pilots. Gordon had men but no tender to transport them. He also said he had no assistance from the merchants. The margin note to this said that the Lords believed that the situation demanded a hot press, ie the impressment of all save those specifically protected from parliament. A letter of 25 June 1759 reveals that Gordon's men had impressed a militiaman, George Spearmen, who was requested back. The Lords of the Admiralty were not disposed to allow this, since the believed Spearman had entered the militia "with a view to screen him from serving in his proper element."

[1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 25 June 1759]

123. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 17 June 1759

Bristol, 17th June 1759

Sir,

It is with great grief I acquaint you that on the Soldiers' arrival in this City, several disputes arose between them and our men which with great difficulty were put a Stop to, but not before several of our men were wounded. I sent the few remainder into the Country to continue there till the Soldiers were embarked; the Colliers in that part, thinking that they had come to impress them, attacked and wounded eight or nine of our People, by which I have not one Man in the Gangs but what is wounded or recovering of their Wounds. I therefore beg leave to repeat my request of having more officers, or the Duty cannot be carryed on in this large and Populous City where we have everything to contend with.

Lieutenant Burrows of the *Devonshire* Tender acquaints me from Plymouth that he must call in at Illford Comb to refit as well as to destroy the Number of Vermin which infest the Vessel. If it is agreeable to their Lordships I would propose as the said officer one well acquainted in ye Channel to be stationed between Lundy and Kingroad, as many Vessels are dayly expected, and that another Tender may be ordered here to receive the Impress Men from this City and the aforementioned Vessel. If the Weather is Moderate the *Caesar* Tender will endeavour to beat down Channel with about 140 new raised men.

Margin: 27 June My Lords are concerned for the Accident that has happened and will send him more officers so soon as they can find them.

[Adm 1/1843 (Thomas Gordon) 17 June 1759]

***124. Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, post 17 June 1759**

An undated letter reveals that Gordon was impressing trowmen from Gloucester and the Severn. Meanwhile, his Lieutenants were facing opposition from privateers, who were returning to Bristol. Thomas Field reported as follows:

Kingroad, July 2nd 1759: I just now arrived here from Minehead in company with *Europa* Letter of Mark[privateer] with whom I kept company 8 hours before my arrival here. I attempted severall time to Board her but without Success. When I came to Kingroad I again attempted with the *Penquin's* boats but could not gett on board as they are determined not to be impressed as they are going up to Hungroad in ye ship. They have 105 men on board for I went on board with Capt Nash in his Boat without arms where I found All the People under Arms & in very good Order. I am well convinced they won't surrender as they will all stand by Each Other. The Capt. Tells me he has 70 able Seamen on board. Mr Dyke has now joyned me so shall Follow your Orders & sail to night, as I cant do anything with this Ship. Shall leave her to the *Penquin*,

I am...Thos Field

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 3 July 1759, enclosure]

125. Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 4 July 1759

Bristol, 4th July 1759

According to your order, I have endeavoured to hire a Cutter to be employed in the Impress Service in this Channel, but as no such was to be found here, I have this day received the Inclosed proposals for a very fine Bermudian Sloop which will answer at least for the summer months & therefore have only contracted for four mouths as wages are greatly enhanced. I do not think considering the extraordinary expenses for Bulkhead &c for so short a contract is unreasonable. However, I have desired closing it till I have an answer. If agreeable I should be glad to have it sent down by Express as many Ships are soon expected & a day may lose as many men.

Messrs Devonshire and Reeves have genteely offered their snow *Reeves* with 12 four pounders & 6 swivels & 16 men for the same sum as the other tender *Devonshire*. She is somewhat smaller but[has] more force, the same number of men, many more conveniences, a fine sailer. I hope in a few days to have her ready as she is much wanted. I have contracted for her and I would not be without her, having now sixty men to send away.

Margin: Direct the Navy Board to write to Mr. Bateman to contract for both these Vessels. Let Gordon know it.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thos Gordon) 4 July 1759]

126. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 8 July 1759

Bristol, 8th July 1759

Sir, I acquainted you by express that the men belonging to the *Europa* would endeavour to escape from her...I have only time to say that sixty eight of them landed this day armed and are dispersed in the country. I shall use my utmost endeavours to

find them. I am grieved they have got away as they vaunted so much that they would not be imprest.

The *Devonshire* Tender is just sailed and there are a Hundred Men to send away in Her, & thirty four in the *Penquin*.

As all my People have been for this week past passing down the River, I must beg leave to postpone an outstanding account of Men Raised, for a Day or Two.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thos Gordon) 8 July 1759]

127. Proceedings of the Common Council of Bristol, 23 July 1759

23 July 1759: On the motion of Mr. Mayor, the House unanimously agreed to confirm the Reward of Three Pounds to every able Seaman, forty shillings to every ordinary seaman and twenty shillings to every able bodied landman, which had been lately given by the Direction of this Corporation and with the Consent of Mr. Mayor and many other members of this House in general for encouraging persons to enter into His Majestie's Sea Service in the present critical Conjuncture; and order'd that the monies which may have been already advanced on this Occasion be charged to the account of the Chamber and that such Rewards be continued to be paid during the continuance of His Majesties Bounty for the like Purposes and Mr. Chamberlain is to issue monies accordingly.

[BRO, M/BCC/CCP/1/13, Bristol Common Council Proceedings, 1754–1762 pp. 221–2]

128. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 25 July 1759

Bristol, 25th July 1759

Sir,

Be pleased to acquaint their Lordships as the two Tenders taken up will want two Officers, I shall be continued in the same situation as I have been these three months with only one Officer. The great fatigue I have lately undergone on that account threw me ten days ago into a Feever, and as I am very weak I pray that officers may be sent.

I beg leave particularly to mention that Richard Crosby and William Johnston, who had entered with me some time past and were indulged to act as petty officers in the gangs, on my ordering them on board the Tender, deserted, and as they knew the strength of our gangs, they procured about forty men and laid in wait for the return, and about ten last night they fell upon our people and badly wounded Eight and rescued seven Imprest Men, their Insolence and Cruelty beyond Expression. I have the pleasure to acquaint you I took Richd. Crosby and have well loaded him with irons in Newgate. I pray their Lordships to make an example of him.

Several of the *Pitt* Privateer's Men having Deserted from her, I ordered my boat on board to secure the Men which were only nine. I beg to know their Lordship's pleasure,

Margin: Two lieutenants are ordered to Bristol as he will see from a former letter. To send Crosby in irons in the first Tender to Plymouth, with proper witnesses, that he may be tried at a court martial. To keep the men.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thos Gordon) 25 July 1759]

129. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 28 July 1759

Bristol, 28th July 1759

Sir,

As the Two Tenders are ready for sea, I pray their Lordships will give Directions that each of them may have a Pilot and a Doctor's Mate, and that a proper supply of medicines and necessaries may be ordered, as the Inclosed Letters will show the want of them. I have promised to intercede with their Lordships for Mr Thompson's wages, as he is diligent. Please let me know how the Tenders are to be supplied with Ordnance stores as...he is in great want of them.

I beg leave to remind you that some time ago Capt. Harris of the *Penquin* refused twenty-two men that were sent to me from Gloucester as being itched and unfit for service. Be pleased to acquaint me what I am to do with the said men.

Enclosure from Mr. James Thompson to Captain Gordon:

Caesar Tender, 24th July 1759

Sir,

Nothing less than absolute necessity could prevail upon me to trouble you, for which I hope your goodness will find an excuse. Know that I belong'd to the *Norwich*, but was left sick at Cork Hospital. On my recovery I was ordered on board the *Caesar* Tender to take care of the People, where I have remained ever since, without either wages or supply of medicines but what I have procured at my own expense, tho we have had several hundreds of imprest men on Board, by which means I am reduced to the utmost extremity. Might I flatter myself that you would represent my case to their Lordships. I make no doubt not only of their payment of my wages, as the *Norwich* has been payd, but also of ordering proper supplies for the service, as we can by no means treat men on shore. The Opportunity of Compliance with this request which I flatter myself is a reasonable one, shall with the greatest gratitude ever be acknowledged by,

Honoured Sir... James Thompson

2nd enclosure: Lieutenant James Gaborian to Captain Gordon

Caesar Tender, Kingroad, July 24th 1759

Sir,

The Surgeon's Mate on board the Tender, having represented to me the great Ill conveniency he labours under for want of Medicine and Necessarys that are usually allowed in the Service, beg will be pleased to apply to their Lordships that a supply may be ordered, as this, I apprehend, is for the good of the service, make no doubt of your being ready to comply with it.

I am, Sir... James Gaborian

Let him know Mr. Thompson should be more particular as to the time he was put ashore & how he has been since employed, & the Lords will order him to be paid.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 28 July 1759]

130. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 5 August 1759

Bristol 5th August 1759

Sir,

As I am just made acquainted some Jamaica ships are dayly expected, I have ordered the Tenders and Comb boats to cruize for them. I beg leave to repeat my request that the Navy Board may order Doctors, Mates, with Medicines and Necessarys for the *Reeves* and *Ferrett* Tenders and also that I may have an order for each of the said vessels to Bear a Pilot, having been obliged to send one to each, as they could not sail without them. I should be glad to know their Lordships pleasure in regard to the Nine Men Imprest from the *Pitt* Privateer, as also concerning the Twenty-two sent her from Gloucester, which were refused by Captain Harris as Itched and unfit for Service.

Lieutenant Runwa is arrived and I have ordered him into the *Ferrett* tender. I am informed Lieutenant Morgan, whom their Lordships had ordered here, is lately Dead. Therefore I shall continue without an Officer.

Margin: Let him know mates and medicine are ordered and that Lieutenant Nathaniel Crosby is ordered to join him. And that the Captain of the *Alborough* will furnish the tenders with a sufficient quantity of Ordnance to get them to Plymouth. If the men he mentions to have received are unfit for service to release & let the officers who raised them know the Lords are greatly dissatisfied with them on that account.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 5 August 1759]

***131. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 10, 15 August 1756**

The letter of 10 August, 1759 reveals that Captain Gordon was discharging some of the recruits from Gloucester, because they were rheumatic, consumptive, blind, crippled or simply boys, two being 15 and 16 years respectively.

15 August 1759: Gordon had a run in with the Bristol merchant, James Laroche,¹⁰ for impressing his mate, Thomas Mills, from the *Prince Tom*, bound for the slave coast. The merchants had desired that all chief mates be protected, but Gordon referred the matter to the Admiralty, saying this was irregular. According to the annotation, the Lords approved of his actions.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 10, 15 August 1756]

¹⁰ James Laroche, a Bristol merchant of Huguenot extraction, slave trader, Mayor of Bristol in 1750, Master of the Society of the Merchant Venturers, 1751.

132. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 18 August 1759

Bristol 18th August 1759

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the Receipt of the Lords of the 15th instant directing me to Impress at Minehead. I beg leave to acquaint you that on the Impressing from all Protections our Officers impress in every Town on each side of the Channel, and this week made another attempt, for tho' they surrounded most of the Towns very privately, they met with little success. The Person who wrote to you about Men being at Minehead conducted our Men there and only Impress three.

I am sorry to acquaint you that the Tenders endeavouring to board a large ship coming in were led near Kingroad before the men would surrender. Unfortunately, six vessels arrived at the next tide, who had Landed most of their Men between Comb[Combe Martin] and the Holmes. We will endeavour to get them ashore.

Margin: 20 August, Let him know I have communicated his Letter to the Lords who approve of what he has done.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 18 Aug. 1759]

133. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 26 August 1759

Bristol, 26th August 1759

Sir,

The *Caesar* and *Reeves* Tenders sailed this Day with a fair wind for Plymouth, having on board Two Hundred and Forty raised men. Be pleased to order Ordnance Stores for the *Reeves* and also that she may bring round some for the *Ferrett* which mounts six four pounders and six swivels, and also that the Tenders may be sent round as soon as possible as they will be much wanted. I beg to know their Lordships' answer to the Inclosed Affidavit. I am...Thos Gordon

Enclosed; The Information of Lawrence Neale

This informant on his Oath saith that about two years and a half ago, he this informant was a Gunner's Mate on board His Majesty's Ship *Lowestoff*, then lying in Plymouth. That at that time a Man (who went by the name of Thomas Johnson) deserted from the said ship. And this informant saith that he this day saw the said Man who so deserted the said ship, and who now goes by the name of Thomas Mahoney and keeps the Sign of the Apple Tree in Marsh Street in this City and County. The mark of Lawrence Neale

Sworn before Henry Muggleworth, Mayor

Margin: 28 August, desire the Board of Ordnance will cause these tenders to be supplied with Ordnance stores. With regard to Mahoney, as the *Lowestoff* is in America will be difficult to confirm. However, if Neale is positive to the identity of the Person, he must take him up as a Deserter.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 26 August 1759]

134. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 26 August 1759

Bristol, 26th August 1759

As the Honorable Commissioners of the Admiralty have directed me to supply the *Ferrett* and *Reeves* Tenders with a proper quantity of Medicines and Necessarys, I have...ordered the *Caesar* the same Proportion which hope their Lordships will approve of, and give directions to the Navy Board. The *Caesar*, bring a large Tender, and stowing a large number of Men, therefore will be of great service to augment her Marines to 16, and also an additional number of Seamen, that she may on the arrival of the expected homeward bound fleet, be able to put a sufficient number in lieu of Imprest Men to prevent her coming so frequently to Kingroad. She has not had a clean bottom these twelve months, be pleased to order her one in Plymouth. According to their Lordships directions I have sent Richard Crosby the deserter in the *Caesar*, Lieutenant Gaborian being the officer of the Gang at the Time the men were received.

Enclosure: Lieutenant James Gaborian to Captain Gordon
Caesar tender, Kingroad, August 20th 1759

Sir, having several Men down with High Fevers, and as we are much crowded with Men, am fearful it may be communicated through the Vessel, I must intreat you to supply the *Caesar* with Medicines & Necessarys as we have neither outward, and I make no doubt with proper care, we shall soon recover those who are ill. I am... James Gaborian.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 26 August 1759]

***135. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 29 August 1759**

On 29 August 1759 Captain Gordon reported that recruitment had come to a standstill. The merchants were prevaricating about who was exempt from impressment, whether masters, mates, apprentices &c, and who should be protected. "The landlords, who take every opportunity to distress the Government and Merchants, have on this occasion sent the seamen a great distance in the Country (who, for their subsistence are employed on the Harvest) in hopes of the extra Premium they expect from the Merchants." The merchants were not too concerned with the premium," Gordon remarked, "as they can with great ease Receive their men on board from either side of the Channel by sending the Seamen by land from Twenty to One Hundred Miles." Every outward-bound ship appeared to have only a skeleton crew of master, mate and foreigners, "too few to work their Ships for a Voyage."

Margin: "acquaint him their Lords will support their officers whatever they do by their directions, but with regard to pressing of men from outward bound ships after they are got into the Channel, it will not be to any purpose as there must be a like number of good Men put in their room."

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 29 August 1759]

136. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 15 September 1759

Bristol 15th September 1759

Sir,

On my endeavours to procure seamen in the City and finding they had entirely deserted it, I consulted with Capt. Penny of the *Aldborough* to desire his assistance to search the Country. He in Person has been several times there without success and I have had no better luck, the landlords keeping too good a look out. However, last Week Lieut. Crosbie had intelligence and attacked Eight well armed in a House, and tho' he had wounded the major part of them and they were at the point of surrendering, he was surrounded by upwards of a Hundred Colliers and Seamen which obliged him to retreat with a few Slightly Wounded.

On Monday last it was reported that the West India Fleet were in the Channel. I applied to Captain Penny for the Boats to go down the Channel the Weather being moderate, and our Tenders, no man to trust in twenty men. As the Fleet did not appear, Lieutenant Crosbie, having been informed by Capt. Penny that 15 Men, most of them deserters, were in a certain house at Cardiff, they landed about five Wednesday morning, surrounded the house and found them there. As he thought they could not evade him, He went to the Chief magistrate to desire his aid, in the intrim (sic) his men were attacked by upwards of Seventy Armed with Blunderbusses &c; Our Men after a short though stout resistance were obliged to fly, having one killed and several wounded; for particulars I refer to Capt. Penny who I am informed has wrote to you on the subject. I have two wounded tho' not dangerously. I can assure their Lordships Captain Penny has been anxious to assist me on all occasions, and tho' we have had no success yet we have used our Utmost.

I have all the Tenders off Lundy to meet the expected Fleet, and we have Eighty Men to send away.

Margin: The Lords desire all possible Means may be used for taking the Rioters. The Magistrates at Cardiff are desired to cause the wounded men to be taken care of, which he is to pay them the expense of, and charge his account.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 15 Sept. 1759]

***137. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 24 September 1759**

On 24 Sept 1759 Gordon reported he had tenders at Lundy waiting for the homeward bound West India fleet. Meanwhile, he had impressed 4 men from the brig *Staffordshire*, some formerly active in the Shetland fishery.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 24 Sept. 1759]

***138. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 2 October 1759**

Bristol 2nd October 1759

Captain Gordon thought “it would not be safe to let the Milford Men remain in Kingroad after the *Aldbrough* was sailed, there were but few Men to guard them, and Wages here being at £4 per month and Nine Guineas advance would be a great inducement to make them desert. “ Gordon reported that “the scarcity of Men has made it impossible to procure a Vessel at any rate ‘till the Fleet is sailed.” It was clear that in return for the protection of their own crews, the merchants had provided a boat, the *Invincible*, for impressed men. Gordon went on: “As the Winter approaches the Homeward bound ships must pass the Holmes, if not arrive in Kingroad before they can land their men. I would propose an active Lieutenant with a sufficient number of Seaman & Mariners to be for Her and by having a good deck Comb[Combe Martin] skiff attending, we may procure many seamen.

I should be glad you would be pleased to order the *Devonshire* Tender’s Party of Marines to be Encreased and the number of Her seaman to be augmented as she lately lost while impressing in this Channel many men for want of a sufficient number to put in lieu.

Margin. Their Lordships approved of hiring the *Invincible* for a Tender. Tell him to put what men and guns he thinks it necessary she should have, likewise how many marines and what officers will be requisite. Order the *Devonshire* Marines to be increased.”

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 2 October 1759]

***139. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 30 October 1759**

The letter of 30 October 1759 shows that the merchants paid £60 per month to rent and equip the *Invincible*. Gordon thought they should call the *Invincible* a guard ship rather than a tender, “as the seamen in general not only hate and despise the name of a Tender, but think they may rise and escape with impunity.” The skiff would cruise between the Kingroad and the Holmes in an attempt to pick up men from homeward bound fleets. Gordon said he needed about 40 reliable men to man these vessels, exclusive of the officers, petty officers, sergeant, corporal and 20 marines. The agents and owners of the *Invincible* were John Rumsey and William Wasbrough; they hired it to the navy for £60 per month.

Gordon reported that the lieutenant in the tenders had impressed men from the homeward bound Leeward Islands fleet, but most were small vessels with foreigners and apprentices, and so they only procured 45 men, who were put on board the *Devonshire* tender and taken off to Milford[Haven] in pursuit of the *Hanover Planter*, “a large ship from Jamaica, mounting 5 carriage guns and about fifty Men, she having refused the Tenders boarding her.” Gordon continued: “As the *Caesar* Tender arrived her last night, I went on board and dispatch’d her away this day... with 139 Men raised here by the Merchants. I flatter myself that by this reinforcement the *Hanover*’s Men may be induced to surrender.”

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 30 Oct. 1759]

140. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 22 October 1759

Bristol, 22nd Oct 1759

Sir,

I beg leave to mention to you as this City is distrest for Seamen on the late Convoy of seven ships sailing, if the *Invincible* had not spared then 17 Seamen, they could not have sailed. I flattered myself I should have prevented any other collecting to withstand us, but as our Tenders were windward of Milford, the Jamaica Fleet landed about seventy men, twenty of which were immediately procured, and was in hopes to have got the rest before they made a Body. We therefore attacked seven Men in a Publick House, but as they were armed with Pistols and Cutlasses, unfortunately six of Ours were dangerously wounded. One of them, Joseph Learment, is since dead, the coroner's inquest brought in a verdict of selfdefence, and as we were on the point of getting them, the remainder of the Landed men from the Fleet were formed well armed in a Body, and coming on us to resque (sic) the Others by which we were glad to escape. I applyed to the new Mayor...for Assistance, having certain intelligence that three and twenty of these armed men were secreted in the house of one Franks, a Distiller in Marsh Street, who was far from disowning it before the Mayor and Aldermen, and he desired I should myself go and see Them as well as the organ Swivell Guns he had planted for their Defence. Upon the whole, as I find there is a demand for five times the Number of seamen than can at present be procured, they denied giving me the usual assistance, not choosing to be distrest as before. I however must beg leave to say I stand extremely well with the Mayor, Corporation & Merchants,

Margin: 25 October, Let him know I have communicated his Letter to the Lords, who are very sorry for the accident that has happened and despair at the difficulty there is to punish the persons concerned.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 22 October 1759]

141. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 15 November 1759

Bristol, 15th November 1759

Sir, I received your letter of the 12th instant inclosing copies of His Majesty's Order in Council for prolonging ...the Bounty to Voluntier Seamen and Landmen, offering rewards for discovering Seamen concealing themselves, pardoning Deserters who shall return into the service and taking up all Stragling Seamen, which I shall make public as soon as possible.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 15 Nov. 1759]

[142.] Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 4 December 1759

The letter of 4 December 1759 revealed that the skiff was too small for the cruising the Bristol Channel in wintertime. The men were fatigued and most had deserted. Gordon

hired a larger vessel, 5 tons, and also 12–14 stout fellows from Combe Martin, who were well acquainted with the Channel and used to piloting. They were to receive 1/6d per day plus subsistence. The higher wages would induce fewer to desert, he believed. He said the merchantmen seldom came higher than Combe Martin in wintertime without a pilot, and these skilled men would be useful in this respect. He also said that the “merchants (were) complaining what Hazards their Ships have Run in this Dangerous Channel by not having good men put in lieu from Tenders.”

Margin: the Admiralty approved of what he had done.

[Adm 1/1834 (Thomas Gordon) 4 Dec. 1759]

143. Isaac Baugh, Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers to Robert Nugent, MP, 11 December 1759

Merchants Hall, Bristol, December 11th, 1759

Sir,

The Society being informed that the Press on shore for Seamen is stopped at Liverpool & the regulating captain who was stationed there withdrawn, & that by means thereof the Trade are enabled to obtain Seamen whilst they carefully avoid coming to this Port & the Merchants are thereby greatly distressed, I am desired to request that you would be so kind as to wait on the Lords of the Admiralty & represent this matter to them, and beg the favour that the orders for impressing on shore at this Port may be likewise withdrawn if our Information is true. The scarcity of seamen here is so great that even the Government themselves get very few, and we therefore flatter ourselves that our request will be more readily granted.

Your readiness on all occasions to serve the Trade of this City renders all apologies for this trouble unnecessary,

I am, &c, Isaac Baugh, Master.

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1s]

144. Isaac Baugh, Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers, to the Lords of the Admiralty, 24 December, 1759

Merchants Hall, 24 December 1759

My Lords,

I have duly received Mr. Cleveland's Letter of the 21st inst. Acquainting me that yr Lordships out of ye king regard for the Trade of Bristol have directed Captain Gordon not to press on shore, & I have communicated the same to the Merchants of this City. They are extremely obliged to your Lordships for it, & at this request I return your Lordships their sincere thanks,

I have the honour to be &c Isaac Baugh, Master.

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

***145. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 7 January 1760**

Captain Gordon received directions to break up the rendezvous. He was engaged in settling accounts, and informed the Admiralty that his slop accounts included shoes, stockings and waistcoats for the men who were “employed Night and Day many Miles in the Country.” He allowed about £9 in slops for the men that had deserted and humbly prayed “their Lordships will not let me be a Sufferer in this Article, as the Duty could not be carried on without the Men being so Cloathed, which was as sparingly as possible.” He also said that Captain Penny of HMS *Aldborough* had only been able to supply the arms for two of the tenders. Mr. Noble, a merchant of the City supplied the arms for the two Comb skiffs and another tender from one of this privateers. He noted: “The Many attacks that have been made upon our Gangs by such Numbers of Armed Men, We have had three killed and upwards of Sixty wounded, which obliged me to keep our men well armed, or else quit the City, and as we have been often over powered, many swords and Pistols have been lost.” This, and the postage to communicate with men at Comb and at Plymouth, meant extra costs for Gordon; “the sailors continually Pestering me with Letters about their Wages, Certificates &c.” He assured their lordships “that my Expenses Supporting the Character of an Officer in such a City as Bristol, which I found absolutely necessary if I expected success, have considerably Exceeded their Lordships’ appointment.”

Margin: The Admiralty was attentive to Gordon’s financial woes but asked for more receipts.

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 7 Jan 1760.]

***146. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 24 April 1760**

Gordon communicated a report from Lieutenant John Runwa of the *Ferret* tender. He also commended Lieutenant Runwa, who had behaved “with great prudence and activity”, especially over the current quarantine which ships were using to evade a search in Kingroad. On 22 April, 1760, Runwa encountered a homeward bound fleet just below Ilfracombe. He received notice from the skiff of Captain William Penny that the *Bristol Galley*, from Africa and the West Indies, was approaching. Runwa recalled that he had fired “ a great many Guns in Order to bring him too; yt I might board him, and Impress his men, but was threatnd to be fir’d at in our little Boat. I desired to speak with ye Master, when I was answer’d by ye People, they were all their own masters, & had confin’d him. I talked with them some Time, told them ye Consequence of firing at ye King’s Colours, but to no Purpose.” The *Bristol Galley* got ahead of his skiff, so Runwa went to Mr. Penny’s skiff and with marines attempted to board to ship. A “sharp Skirmish ensued.” Runwa found the ship to be the *Mary Galley* from Alicante. William Penny was wounded in the arm, and one of the *Mary Galley*’s crew killed and another wounded. “My Marines behaved like Angells,” Runwa reported. He secured 16 of these “pirates” and asked for advice about how to dispose of them.

Margin: Let him know I have communicated his letter to their Lordships who are particularly concerned for the accident that has happened.

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 24 April 1760]

***147. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 23 July 1760**

Bristol 23rd July 1760. The letter gives an account of an escape from the *Rising Sun* from New York, which Lieutenant John Runwa had boarded. "While our People were busy about the Sails, the Men Rushed out all armed with Blunderbusses &c and jumpt into the Pilot Boat." One of the Marines fired a Pistol to prevent their escaping and unfortunately killed the Pilot's Boy. This accident happened out of the Mayor's jurisdiction, but the body was brought on shore to this City. The inquest brought in a verdict of murder by persons unknown. Previous to the Inquest the Lieutenant had sent the marine to Plymouth, to Commodore Hanway, to prevent any disputes.

"The magistrates here have told me that when ever they judged proper they would send their silver Oar and take any Person out of King's Ships or Tenders and that upon the Lieutenants refusing their Officers coming on board, they would prosecute him to the utmost. I acquainted them that their officer should not be permitted to go on board till I had their Lordships' orders on that head. I must beg leave to mention that I have often been endeavoured to be imposed on by the seamen given their notes for upwards of £20, and was the Silver Oar[civil power] permitted to go on board, by this stratagem we should lose most of our men.

I should be glad to have their Lordships' Directions on this affair as also of the Habeas Corpus Act." I am, &c. Thos Gordon.

Margin: Let him know I have communicated his letter to their Lordships who approve of his proceeding.

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 23 July 1760]

148. Impressing by artifice, 8 November 1760

We have advice from Bristol that on the 8th inst. a midshipman had the artifice to deceive the master of a vessel in King-road under pretense of being a pilot and impressed six of his men, leaving only two on board.

[*Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser*, 18 November 1760]

***149. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 12 November 1760**

Bristol, 12 Nov 1760: Gordon said that as the late outward bound fleets were well manned with British seamen, the impress service should get a good haul

when they returned next spring. The officers in the tenders said that seamen in the homeward bound ships frequently fired on them, and they wanted the Admiralty's permission to impress them if they could be caught in order to prevent such practices in the future.

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 12 Nov. 1760]

***150. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 9 December 1760**

Bristol, 9 Dec 1760 Gordon's letter reveals that the *Ferret* tender was unfit for service and the *Caesar* had been lost. This left only the *Devonshire* and *Reeve*, the former repairing at Ilfracombe and the latter had to be repaired upon its return to Plymouth. Gordon was still employing three Comb skiffs of 25 tons each, hired at £12 a month. These had been very serviceable, so that the tenders had been able to keep to their stations at Lundy and consequently able to prevent desertion.

Margin: "Their Lordships have no objection to his impressing such as shall appear to have been principally concerned in the behaviour he mentioned."

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 9 Dec. 1760]

***151. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 10 January 1761**

Bristol, January 10th 1761.

Gordon asked if one of Captain Penny's midshipmen could come before their Lordships to state his case. While impressing in Cardiff, the midshipman, James McGrath, was shot in the eye and nose, "and by all the accounts I have received of that affair behav'd with great prudence and Bravery and by his good conduct many of our men were sav'd who were attacked by near fourscore seamen."

Enclosure:

This contained a deposition of Lieutenant Crosby, who said that James McGrath, late midshipman of the *Aldborough*, had been employed impressing men at Cardiff in Sept 1759. McGrath had been asked to assist in securing deserters from the navy who "were got together at Cardiff." Lieutenant Crosby stated that McGrath "behaved with great Activity and resolution upon that occasion, and that he had lost his left eye by a Musket ball in engaging the Deserters. He continued ill most part of the time since, and on the 23rd April last was discharged unserviceable by Capt. Penny at Plymouth, being unable to bear Sea Fatigue, the Ball having fractured his Temple, occasioned by the Loss of part of the Archbone of the Eye, carried away the upper part of his Nose, and shot out the Eye." This injury impaired the sight of McGrath's other eye and "subjected him to frequent Head Achs (sic)" The next deposition, by Lt.

Nathaniel Crosby, said the midshipman's name was William, not James McGrath.

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 10 Jan. 1761]

152. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 22 June 1761

Bristol 22nd June 1761

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships I have imprest from the late Homeward bound Ships forty men, His Majesty's Ship *Thames* having imprest most of the Ships before their arrival in this Channel. As I have only Two Tenders on this Station and many large ships Dayly Expected, which seldom have their Men Imprest but by boarding Sword in Hand, beg to have their Lordship's directions to put the above forty men on board the *Thunder* bomb,¹¹ or any of His Majesty's Ships bound from Milford[Haven] to Plymouth.

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 22 June 1761]

153. Captain Thomas Gordon to John Cleveland, 2 July 1761

Bristol, 2nd July 1761

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that I have received their orders to proceed to Portsmouth to command His Majesty's Ship *Alarm* during the Indisposition of Captain Rickworth. I shall lose no time in repairing to the ship.

I beg leave to mention that Lieutenant John Runwa and Lieutenant Nathaniel Crosby are on shore here.

[Adm 1/1835 (Thomas Gordon) 2 July 1761]

154. Captain Thomas Gordon to Joseph Daltera, Master of the Merchant Venturers, 2 July 1761

Bristol, 2 July 1761,

Sir,

The Admiralty having order'd me to ye command of the *Alarm* at Portsmouth, I think it incumbent on me before I leave Bristol, which I am to do immediately, to desire that I may be permitted to express thru your means to the Society of Merchants, the most grateful sentiments I shall ever retain of that Testimony they have done me the Honour to give of my endeavours to discharge the Duties of my Employ here, with a due regard to His Majesties Service, and the satisfaction of this City. Permit

¹¹ A vessel designed to carry one of two heavy mortars for bombarding the shore.

me likewise Sir, to add that I shall esteem it one of my greatest happiness to have opportunities of manifesting the utmost attention to and regard for the interest of your Society.

[BRO, SMV 2/4/2/4]

155. William Hart, Master of the Merchant Venturers, to the Lords of the Admiralty, 14 December 1761

Bristol December 14th 1761

My Lords,

This Society being informed that Mr. John Shaw, late Pilot of his Majestie's Ship *Looe* is under confinement at Plymouth pursuant to the Sentence of a Court Martial for an Offence committed against a Superior Officer who has since been himself broke for misbehaviour, and that he labours under an ill state of Health, I am desired to represent to your Lordships that the said Mr. Shaw was extreamly useful in manning the Frigates stationed at this Port; That during his being Pilot of his Majestie's Ship *Looe* he behaved himself as a good and able officer and has taken & very nearly compleated a Chart of the Channel belonging to this Port which is allowed by the several Masters of Ships who have seen it to be very accurate & useful & which this Society are extreamly desirous of having compleated for the Benefit of the Publick. That for these reasons they take the liberty to recommend the said Mr Shaw to your Lordships as worthy of your lenity, which they hope will be extended to him by a mitigation of his Sentence & which will greatly oblige them.

Your Lordships most obedient servant, Willam Hart, Master

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

156. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 5 January 1762

Bristol, 5th January 1762

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have...inquired into the cause of the Complaint made by Patrick Collins pilot of the *Reeve* Tender against Lieut. Calder and the Master of the Tender.

When Lieut. Calder first applied to me to discharge the Pilot the reason he gave was his being often much troubled with the gout, and at such times not capable to take any charge of the Vessel in whatever emergency; for which reason I gave my Consent, knowing how necessary it is to have, in Bristol Channel, not only a skilful & vigilant Pilot, but also an active one, neither of which he is. As to the other part of his charge, that they allowed imprest men to go ashoar for money, I am totally satisfied of the falsehood of it, nor could the Pilot mention anything but the one instance refer[red] to in the letter....I am, W Hamilton

Margin: 6 January: Let him know I have sent his report to the Lords who are satisfied therewith.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton 1762) 5 Jan. 1762]

***157. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 5 January 1762**

5 Jan 1762: Hamilton reported that the captain of a Jamaica man, whose men had been impressed, desired the officer to take his mate, whom he claimed had been guilty of mutiny. The mate applied to Hamilton and desired that he would look into his character and that of his captain. It was disclosed that the mate had been the master of the ship, "tho' reduced by misfortune." The character of the captain was said to be "indifferent" and Hamilton surmised that the request to impress had been malicious. He therefore ordered Lt Calder to discharge the mate, with the proviso that he did not come to Bristol.

Margin: Let him know I have sent his report to the Lords who are satisfied therewith

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 5 Jan.1762]

158. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 25 February, 1762

Bristol 25th February 1762

Sir,

I received your Letter with their Lordships' directions to supply the Tender employed at Glo'ster with 12 Muskets, 12 Cartouche boxes, 12 Cuttlases, & six pair of Pistols, and have accordingly ordered the Master of the *Devonshire* Tender to supply them, as she cannot now go to Plymouth, having sprung a leak since I wrote last, so that I cannot send the men round till the arrival of the *Reeve* Tender, which I expect any moment.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 25 Feb. 1762]

159. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 18 March 1762

Bristol 18th March 1762

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the *Reeve* Tender, commanded by Lieut. Patrick Calder, Sailed this Day for Plymouth with sixty new rais'd men, most of them good seamen, and that I am in great want of another Tender as the other [*Devonshire*] must now be dockt. And as I have now above 20 men left, & hope soon to get more, I am afraid I shall be obliged to hire a Vessell for their security till the Tender comes out of Dock, or the *Reeve* returns.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 18 March 1762]

***160. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 27 March 1762**

27 March 1762: Bristol merchants had applied to the Admiralty for a tender to convoy vessels to Dublin and the North of Ireland. Hamilton said he could not spare a tender at the moment but when the *Reeve* returned he would order her to go on convoy.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 27 March 1762]

161. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 3 April 1762

Bristol, 3rd April 1762

Sir,

Please to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that as it is much the fashion in this town for the keepers of the Publick Houses to secret seamen who have deserted from His Majesty's Service, and having it in my power to prove it against one of them, I beg to know if their Lordships will approve of my proceeding against him, as I think it may be of us and a check to them.

Margin: 5 April Refer it to Mr. Seddon[Admiralty Solicitor] for his opinion whether an action may properly be commenced. (Hamilton did this on 8 April, 1762, see Adm 1/3678/228)

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 3 April 1762]

162. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 17 April 1762

Bristol, 17th April 1762

Sir,

I received your letter of the 14th desiring me to enquire after one Mr. Roger Williams and desire you will please to acquaint their Lordships that I have made all possible enquiry but cannot hear of any person of that name in this City.

You will please also to inform their Lordships that having wrote to Admiral Durell to know when he will send me a Tender, and there being none at Plymouth, I shall be obliged to hire a Vessel to keep the Imprest Men safe, having now near Seventy, till the Devonshire Tender ...if fit for sea, for the better carrying on the service.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 17 April 1762]

163. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 29 April 1762

Bristol 29th April 1762

Sir,

Please to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have sent Lieut. Calder in the *Reeve* Tender round to Plymouth with Sixty-Eight new rais'd

men, and have sent by him a compleat list of their names, & time of entry, to be delivered to the Commanding Officer there.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 29 April 1762]

164. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 17 May 1762

Bristol 17th May 1762

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that some men belonging to a ship just arrived from the Mediterranean have broke their Quarantine, & being taken up by the Constables, are now here in prison. The magistrates having offered them to me for His Majesty's Service, I desire to know if I may take them before the Ship's Quarantine is out.

Margin: 19th May, to take them when they have performed their Quarantine, but not before.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 17 May 1762]

***165. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 19 June 1762**

The Mayor of Bristol, Isaac Elton, applied to Hamilton for the discharge of William Jenkins, of HMS *Essex*. Jenkins had left Bristol as a mate of a vessel, which was subsequently captured by a French privateer. This privateer was then taken by HMS *Essex* before she arrived in France. Elton offered a substitute for Jenkins. Hamilton hoped their Lordships would oblige as Elton had "been of great service to me in the Duty I am here upon."

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 19 June 1762]

166. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 6 July 1762

Bristol, 6th July 1762

Sir,

A Man belonging to his Majesty's ship *Looe* who was left sick at the Hospital here was enlisted for a Soldier. I applyed to the officer with whom he enlisted here, who wrote to Major Wade, the commanding officer at Wells where he had sent to men to let him know he was a deserter from the Navy. The Major has refused to discharge him without an order from the Secretary at War to whom he said he would write, but as I have heard nothing since, please to inform their Lordships of it that they might get the order for his being sent her again. The man's name is Will Vandernegra, but he was enlisted by the name of Wm. Wain.

Margin: 9 July: Desire the Secretary at War to order the Deserter to be delivered up.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 6 July 1762]

167. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 15 July 1762

Bristol, 15th July 1762

Sir,

I received your letter of the 12th and according to their Lordships' directions shall send to Wells for the deserter William Vandernegra. Please to inform their Lordships there is a midshipman on board the *Devonshire* Tender, Mr. Salmon, who has produced me a Certificate from Commissioner Rogers at Plymouth of his having been rated, and afterwards, by being in the Tender when the *Barfleur's* Men were turned over into the *Duke*, disrated. And as he is a very good man & does his duty will hope their Lordships will allow me to pay him his extra wages...

Margin: 19 July: Admiral Durell to enquire & inform his Lordships why he was disrated.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 15 July 1762]

168. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 7 August 1762

Bristol, August 7th, 1762

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords...that Major Wade of the 74th Regiment has applied to me by order of His Majesty's Secretary at War for the Expenses they had been at with William Varn alias Vandernegra, a Deserter from his Majesty's Ship *Looe*, that had inlisted in the said regiment & was given up to me, being seven pounds, fifteen shillings, and that I beg their Lordships directions how, or in what manner I am to pay it.

Margin: direct him to send the particular articles of expenses that their Lordships may judge how far it may be proper to comply with what is demanded.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 7 August 1762]

169. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 11 August 1762

Bristol 11th August 1762

Sir, Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that yesterday the *Reeve* Tender sailed for Plymouth with sixty new rais'd men and that I ordered Lieut.

Calder who commands her, to take under his Convoy two Vessells laden with stores for his Majestys Dock Yards. And in consequence of a letter from the Master of the Merchants Hall I have ordered Lieut. Burrows in the *Devonshire* Tender to see the Trade from this place into Waterford and Cork and then return to the station, which I hope their Lordships will approve.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 11 Aug. 1762]

170. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 17 November 1762

Bristol, 17th November 1762

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have followed their Lordships' orders, and I shall immediately break up the rendezvous here according to their directions, & order the Tenders with the new rais'd men round to Plymouth. I have some men in my gang who live in this place who beg their Lordships will be so good to order them to be paid here. It will be very inconvenient & expensive for them to go round to Plymouth. I shall be very glad if their Lordships will allow it to be done.

Margin: Let me see whether he has not orders to pay his gang. He has, Sir. Refer him to the order in answer to that part of his letter.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 17 Nov. 1762]

171. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 3 December 1762

Sir,

According to their Lordships' directions I send you enclosed my own press warrant with those of Lieutenants Burrows, Calder, Crosby, Home, Fielding, Lambert. Lieutenant John Runwa is now at Ilford the Combe[Ilfracombe]. I have ordered him to come hither & bring the skiffs with him, that they may be paid off, when I shall also sent his press warrant.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm. Hamilton) 3 Dec. 1762]

172. Captain William Hamilton to John Cleveland, 14 December 1762

December 14th 1762

Sir, I have received your letter with their Lordships' directions to give my opinion of Thomas Crockford receiving the difference in pay between able seaman and midshipman of His majesty's ship *Duke* while employed at Bristol in the Impress Service, & beg you will inform their Lordships that I think he highly deserves it, being always employed by me as my officer, and for the most part upon the most

disagreeable part of the Service and more especially as their Lordships have granted to same indulgence to three others belonging to the said ship.

[Adm 1/1897 (Wm Hamilton) 14 Dec. 1762]

173. Samuel Sedden to John Cleveland, 8 April 1762

Piccadilly, 8 April 1762

In obedience to the Directions of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty signified to me in your letter of 6th instant (enclosing a Letter from Captain Hamilton who regulates the Press at Bristol giving an account that one of the Publicans at Bristol secretes[hides] Seamen who are Deserters from his Majesty's Service) to report my Opinion whether an Action may to properly commenced against the said publican, I take the Liberty to acquaint you for their Lordships' Information, that Captain Hamilton in his Letter says, he has it now in his power to prove the Fact against one of them, I humble apprehend That a prosecution by Information in the Name of the Attorney General may be maintained against such publican and submit it to their Lordships' Consideration whether they would not be pleased to direct Captain Hamilton to transmit affidavits of the Fact stating the particular Circumstances of the Case.

I herewith return Captain Hamilton's Letter, which you was pleased to send me.

[Adm 1/3678 f. 228]

C: THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CRISIS, 1770–1771

174. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, Secretary to the Admiralty, 3 November 1770

Bristol, 3rd Nov 1770

Sir,

Pleased to acquaint ye Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty That in a conversation today with ye Mayor of this City, he is strongly of opinion that it would be the greatest inducement for Men to enter into the Service, if their Lordships would please order me to pay here ye Bounty Money to them; and as many of the Landlords would the readier perswade such Men who are indebted to them to enter, as they might then be paid by the said Bounty. I am informed that this was done in the last Warr. The Mayor will propose at ye Meeting of ye Hall a continuation of their Bounty, which expires this day.

The Mayor Scruples Backing the press Warrants till such time as the Tender is ready to receive the Imprest Men. Therefore I have ordered the Lieutenants to use their endeavours to enter as many Volunteers as they can, and to compleat their Gangs by Men settled here that have familys, at the Hire allow'd by my Instructions, which I hope their Lordships will approve of.

As I have but one (a General) Rendezvous here, I am to request their Lordships will allow me a Room beside as my Office to transact my business in with Gentlemen, Informers, &c that come on the Service, which cannot be attended with that Privacy & Success at ye Rendezvous in a Publick House." I am...John N. P. Nott.

Margin: Let him know that their Lordships cannot, under the current proclamation, authorize the bounty. Let him know what ships and vessels are available in Bristol until the Tender arrives.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 3 Nov. 1770]

***175. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, November–December 1770**

A letter, dated 10 November 1770, shows that the number of volunteers who entered in the first week was 18: 11 seamen and 7 landmen. The second week brought in 28, of which 17 were seamen, and the third 46, of which 28 were seamen. Once the gangs were fully operable the return was greater. Between 15 and 22 December 1770, 242 men were recruited by two lieutenants, of which 47 were impressed seamen and 106 seaman volunteers. The weekly return 22–29 December 1770 revealed that 291 men were entered, of which 66 were impressed seamen, 114 seamen volunteers, 99 landmen volunteers, and 12 returned by the magistrates.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott), 10, 17 November 1770, 22, 29 December 1770.]

***176. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 12 November 1770**

Bristol, 12 Nov 1770: Captain Nott reported that in Bristol Bridewell there were 8 or 10 seamen imprisoned there for petty offences; some had entered the service since their confinement; the others Nott had permission (from the mayor) to impress, but he would have to pay their debts where necessary. The gang in Bristol was entered at 18 pence per day, plus 1 shilling subsistence. Most of them were freemen and all inhabitants with families in the city. Nott was “of Opinion they will always be of the best Service in getting Men; from their knowledge of the Seamen’s Haunts.” He also mentioned he had many landlords offering men.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 12 Nov. 1770]

***177. Capt. John Nott to Philip Stevens, 17 November 1770**

On 17 November 1770, Nott reported to the Admiralty the case of John Pearson, who volunteered for the navy but three days later did not appear for the muster. In fact, he had taken the king’s shilling for the army. It also appeared that the sergeant paid the recruit that brought in John Pearson half a guinea. Five shillings was also spent entertaining Pearson, plus the king’s shilling. The total expense to the army amounted to 17/6d. Nott continued “Two or three days ago John Pearson gave our People the slip and got off, but if my intelligence is good, hope to have him again.”

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 17 November 1770]

***178. Captain John Nott to Philip Stevens, 1, 6 December 1770**

On 1 Dec 1770 Nott reported that the tender had gone to Kingroad and the mayor would back his warrants for a press at the beginning of the week. They would begin with a general press, and the civil power would provide

a constable to assist from each ward. The general press was made on 5 December 1770. In a letter of 6 December he added: "The Boat which I sent down to the *Lively* and *Dispatch*[Tenders] is not yet returned, neither have I head anything of them, but believe the Volunteers will be sufficient security for the prest Men this trip."

[Adm 1/2220 (J.N.P. Nott) 1, 6 Dec, 1762]

179. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 22 December 1770

Bristol, 22nd December 1770

Sir,

Please to acquaint the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that last night we put their orders into execution to impress from all protections and got but twenty-five seamen as all the Men here belonging to the Ships are gone into Kingswood among the Colliers, where we dare not go after them, and are constantly supplied with provisions by the Landlords, and when the Merchant Ships are ready for sea, are sold by those Landlords (who only regard the Money in hand) for a premium from the Masters and Owners.

Agreeable to their Lordships' Orders I have been endeavouring to hire a vessel to lay here during the absence of a Man of War, and Tender, and find I cannot get one under six months certain, and as long afterwards as required. Messrs. Reeve, Son and Hill have a vessel of about one hundred and eighty Tons, which they will properly equip for a Tender, to lay constantly moored in Kingroad with only the lower Masts on, as one did last war, and only to find Men sufficient to clean and take care of her stores, clear Hawse &c.

If their Lordships approve of such a vessel being hired for the six months certain, I will not lose any time to have her got ready, as she will be immediately wanted, having only the *Aldbrough* and the *William and Mary* Tender in the Road, who only wait for a fair wind, and have as many men on board as they can carry.

Also if their Lordships thought proper to order a Lieutenant and Petty Officers with Arms and a Surgeons Mate for her, as I have not any here but what I now absolutely need for the Service on shore.

The *Folkstone* Cutter is of great service to me, but the *Dispatch* is not yet arrived.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 22 Dec. 1770]

180. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 3 January 1771

Bristol, 3rd January 1771

Sir,

I beg leave to represent to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the *Aldbrough* having so many supernumeraries on board, I am apprehensive she may become sickly if the Wind keeps her much longer here, and I have now Twenty-Five men more to put on board which I cannot[leave] on shore. I therefore request their

Lordships' directions respecting hiring a Tender as mentioned in my Letter of the 22nd last Month, or in what other manner they shall think proper.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 3 January 1771]

181. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 5 January 1771

Bristol, 5 January 1771

Sir...If their Lordships thought proper to order another cutter in this Service, she would be of the greater utility in preventing the Ships landing men between Ilfar Comb and Kingroad. Here the Folkstone is not sufficient, or if Comb skiffs were hired to assist her, as in the last war.

Margin: Let him know that their Lordships cannot at present spare another cutter for that Service. If he needed to hire a tender or skiffs, he should do it on the most reasonable terms possible.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 5 January 1771]

182. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 12 January 1771

Bristol, 12 January 1771

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have agreed with Messrs. Reeve and Son for the Ship *Andrews* between 180 and 200 tons for six months certain at fifty pounds per month, four pounds per month for the Master, and twenty two shilling and six pence per month for ten men each, and to be properly equipped for laying in Kingroad. The Master, Jacob Smith, was on this Service in a like Tender the last war, who is to act as Midshipman or Officer for Impressing if their Lordships approve of sending him a press warrant. He is by character a proper Man, understands that duty and is to be depended on.

I have sent to Ilfracombe to seek for two skiffs proper for the Service, whose men are to be supplied with provisions from the Tender, and if their Lordships approve of it, to have a Midshipman at two shillings and sixpence per day and twelve men at one shilling and sixpence per day, beside the owner of the skiff, as in the last war. I must beg impress warrants ...when I can get two Steady Midshipmen to command them, as also directions respecting the purchasing...

His Majesties Ships the *Aldborough* and *Folkstone* cutter sailed last Tuesday with about 240 men on board them. The *Andrews* I hope will go into Kingroad next week as we have not any Tender yet arrived.

Herewith you have the weekly account of such men as have been raised at this Port. I have not pushed the pressing Service this week, as Bridewell is so wretched a place to keep the men in.

[Adm 1/1220 (J. N. P. Nott) 12 Jan. 1771]

183. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 19 January 1771

Bristol, 19th January 1771

Sir, If your Lordships thought proper to send a Serjeant and ten Marines for the Service of the *Andrews* Tender in Kingroad, they would be of more utility as Centinels than we can possibly bring the Seamen to, and more to be depended.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 19 Jan. 1771]

184. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 24 January 1771

Bristol 24 January 1771

Sir, Please acquaint the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that on Lord Clare's Letter to the Mayor of this City yesterday, I waved the agreement for the hire of two Comb skiffs till their Lordships further directions concerning them.

The *William and Mary* Tender (belonging to Messrs. Reeve, Son, & Hill of this Port) arrived her yesterday and will be ready to proceed with men to Plymouth in a few days.

Margin: Concur & Approve. Direct him to dispatch the *Florida* Storeship with such arms he may have ready to put in her to Spithead, as expeditiously as he can.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 24 Jan. 1771]

185. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, 26 January 1771

Bristol, 26th January 1771

Sir,

His Majesty's Ship the *Aldborough*, *Florida* Storeship, with the *William and Mary* Tender are all in Kingroad, But the *Betsy* I have ordered to Plymouth the first fair wind with as many men as she can carry.

[Adm 1/2220 (J. N. P. Nott) 26 Jan. 1771]

***186. Captain John Nott to Philip Stephens, February–March 1771**

On 2 February 1771, Nott reported that the *Florida* Storeship sailed from Kingroad on 29th January with 90 new raised men on board. In a letter dated 5 February, he sent the Admiralty his estimate of the number of seamen that the Bristol merchants were holding back from the press. Throughout February 1771 Captain Nott keep recruiting. On 23 February 1771 he sent the *Betsy* Tender to Plymouth with 60 recruits. By the end of the month, as impressment was winding down, he was discussing the return of the *William*

and Mary Tender to its owners. On the 2nd March he paid off the seaman on the *Aldborough* tender and ordered the master to deliver the boat to its owners “who demanded the full money £300 for the Six Months stipulated time.” All press warrants were returned to the Admiralty.

[Adm 1/2220 (J.N.P. Nott) 2, 5, 23 Feb., 2 March 1771]

D: THE WAR AGAINST AMERICA, 1776–1783

***187. Samuel Seddon to Philip Stephens, 4 November 1776**

Piccadilly, November 4th 1776.

Seddon reported that the crew of the ship *Dickenson* had been detained in Bristol under the Prohibitory Act, by an order of the High Court of Admiralty. While deliberations about the ship and cargo went on, one of the crew, John Gurney a “poor fellow” who lived “very peaceably” in Bristol, “waiting for the Condemnation of the Ship and Cargo”, was impressed. The other members of the crew “concealed themselves for fear of a like Misfortune”, which meant they could not get their daily subsistence money of one shilling and six pence. The town clerk of Bristol hoped John Gurney would be discharged and protections offered to the crew, “as these Men seem to have some claim upon the Public for what they did in regard to the *Dickenson*.” Seddon agreed and advised accordingly.

Margin: “13 November 1776, Let Mr. Seddon know their Lordships do not grant protections to Individual Seaman; that it does not appear to their Lordships that these men should be exempt from serving in the navy and running right into debt, and they therefore recommend to him to advise them to enter on board one of the Kings ships of the line set likely to go abroad.”

[Adm 1/3680 ff. 889]

188. Proceedings of the Common Council of Bristol, 11 December 1776

11 Dec 1776: Mr Mayor acquainted the House that on the 23 November last the Mayor and Aldermen with the consent of several members of the Common Council had offered a bounty of Three Pounds to every able bodied seaman, forty shillings

to every ordinary seaman and twenty shillings to every able bodied landsman (additional to the respective Bounties offered by his Majesty's Royal Proclamation) who should on or before 31 December instant voluntarily enter themselves to serve in his Majesty's Navy; And Mr. Mayor moved that the same be confirmed by this House; and the Question being put thereon this House doth agree with the said motion, and Mr Chamberlain is ordered to issue monies and pay the said Bounties according to the advertisement which has been published in several newspapers.

[BRO, M/BCC/CCP/1/13, Bristol Common Council Proceedings, 1772–1783 p 135]

189. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 4 January 1777

Bristol, 4 January 1777

Sir,

Herewith I transmit to you an account of the men raised this week by the officers under my command, and also the return from Lieutenant Metherell of the *Fanny* Tender, which you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. I am, W. Hamilton

Enclosure: In the week 28 Dec 1776 to 4 Jan 1777, nine were recruited of which two were impressed. This was from two gangs, one under command of Lieutenant Katon and the other under Lieutenant Lowder. Those put on board the *Fanny* tender, from 31 Dec–2 Jan 1777 included 40 volunteers and 17 impressed. They were rated as 30 able seamen, 12 ordinary and 15 landmen.

[Adm 1/1903 (William Hamilton) 4 Jan. 1777]

190. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 30 January 1777

Bristol, 30th January 1777.

Sir,

Please inform by Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the *Fanny* Tender, Lieutenant Metheral, sailed this morning for Plymouth with the new rais'd men, an account of what they are, I send you inclosed, which you will please lay before their Lordships.

Men sent in *Fanny* tender to Plymouth and raised at Bristol, January 30 1777. Volunteers 81, Imprest 57. Of these, 74 able, 38 ordinary, 26 landmen. Total 138.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 30 Jan. 1777]

191. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 25 April 1777

Bristol, 25th April 1777.

Sir,

I have received your Letter with the Lordships' directions to inform them of my reasons for ordering Lieutenant Carlyon commanding the *Admiral Spry* tender to discharge five Seamen he had impressed in Kingroad, which should have been laid before their Lordships at the time, had not I just then been seized with a very severe sore throat which confined me to my Room for some days.

The Ships going up and down this River, which is very narrow, are obliged to be attended by a number of large Row Boats. The men who work in them under the direction of the Pilot live in a little village called Pill at the mouth of the River, & do all the business the Shipping whilst in Kingroad, whether homeward or outward bound. They are absolutely the necessary to the trade of this City & have always been considered as such when I came here I lett them know they should not be Imprest, if they behaved well & neither assisted any Seamen to escape, nor suffered any to harbour amongst them. I have had several Seamen from them & have also Prest some of them who were detected helping some Seamen to escape. Some of these men Lieutenant Carlyon Imprest, the Consequence of which was the rest refused to Work & several Ships then loaded at the Key were hindered from going down for two or three days. Among the Rest one of the Falmouth Packetts that have been here lengthening.

I was applied to by the Master of the Merchants Hall, whose letter I herewith inclose you, to interfere & accordingly gave an order for their Discharge which from the Circumstances I have related & that there was actually a total Stagnation to all the Business of the Port. I hope their Lordships will approve that Lieutenant Carlyon was informed of all these Circumstances & when he pressed these five men, might as well have prest fifty.

I am, Sir, &c William Hamilton

Margin: let him know their Lordships are satisfied with what he has done.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 25 April 1777]

192. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 25 April 1777

Hamilton reported that the Master of the Merchant Venturers had complained to him about the impressment of Pill Boatmen. The following letter was enclosed:

Henry Garnett, Master of the MVs to Hamilton.
Merchants Hall, 15 April 1777.

Sir,

One of the Lieutenants of the Tender having impress some of the Pill Boatmen, the rest have refused to work; by which means several ships now ready loaded at the Quay are hindered from going down, and may possibly lose the Spring if the matter is not remedied. I must therefore desire that you will interfere and order the men to be discharged or a total stop will be put to the business of the Port. I am, Sir, &c Henry Garnett, Master.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 25 April 1777]

193. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 12 May 1777

Bristol, 12 May 1777

Sir,

Yesterday Lieutenant Metherell of his Majesty's Tender the *Fanny* sailed for Plymouth with 87 new raised men on board and six belonging to other ships. An Account of whom I enclose which you will please lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. Lieutenant Metherell having represented to me that in consequence of an information from one of the Pill boatmen, he had impressed a seaman from a Ship in the road, who was hid away in such a manner as to elude the closest and strictest search, the Dock having been taken up, Placed down again. I beg to know if I may be allowed to give him the information money.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 12 May 1777]

194. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 31 May 1777

Bristol, 31 May 1777

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of men rais'd here this week by the officers under my Command, which you will please lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Please to inform their Lordships that there is an action against one of the midshipmen belonging to the gang for breaking open a door. There was a regular information of some men being in the house, and the Lieutenant who went upon the service was attended by a Constable, who upon their refusal to open the door, ordered it to be broken open. The seamen who were within, during the Contest made their escape, but we have proof their having been in the house. I have ordered an Attorney to defend it, and I hope their Lordships will approve of what I have done.

[Adm 1/ 1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 31 May 1777]

195. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 4 June 1777

Bristol, 4th June 1777

Sir,

There is a Vessel arrived here from Jamaica that parted with Convoy in the Gulf. As they are soon expected in, and as it is customary for the men to get on shore before the ships come to Kingroad, I have hired a skiff and manned her from the gangs here, to go down a little way & meet them. I have hired her only for this occasion, but I think it would benefit the service to have one for the summer, as ships are now coming home from all parts. I beg to have your Lordships' directions on this.

Margin: 6 June: desire him to let one...on the terms upon which he has now hired her...for the remainder of the summer.

[1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 4 June 1777]

196. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 22 June 1777

Bristol, 22 June 1777

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners that his Majesty's Tender the *Rose*, commanded by Lieutenant Gibson, sailed yesterday for Plymouth, with 97 new raised men, 51 Able[seamen], 37 Ordinary, and 11 Landmen.¹²

I have received the proclamations[regarding bounties] & shall take care to make them as publick as possible.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 22 June 1777]

197. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 10 July 1777

Bristol 10 July 1777

Sir, In answer to your's of the 5th desiring to know the Reason why William Brodle was imprest from a protection, you will please to inform their Lordships that the protection the vessel had specified three men and a boy, that the said William Brodle, who post for the boy was a Man at least five or six and twenty years of age, for which reason it appeared an imposition, I thought it proper to keep him & have sent him to Plymouth in the *Rose* tender which I hope their Lordships will approve of, as a means to hinder such impositions for the future. The application from Mr. Morgan was not inclos'd to me.

Margin: let me see the letter from Mr Morgan. And 4 July, Mr Morgan to be acquainted with this.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 10 July 1777]

198. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 13 July 1777

Bristol, 13 July 1777

Sir,

I beg you will please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that in consequence of an information, a Midshipman belonging to the gang imprest a Man, that, as he was carrying him to the rendezvous, he was stopped by a Mr. Lewellin,

¹² Some of these were likely taken at King Road, for the *London Evening Post*, 12–14 June 1777, reported 60 were taken up there as part of the returning Jamaica fleet.

a woollen draper in this City, who rais'd a mob and took the Man from him in the course of which he, the petty officer, was very much beat. Inclosed I send the case as taken by a Lawyer, which will be sworn to, & beg their Lordships' directions, if I may commence a prosecution against Mr. Lewellin.

Inclosed I send the Account of the men raised here last week by the officers under my command, as also the account of the Men now on board the *Fanny* Tender.

Margin: 18 August. Let him know that their Lordships do not approve of his bringing an action against Lewellin.

[1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 13 July 1777]

199. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 15 July 1777

Bristol 15 July 1777

Sir,

Sometime ago I desired you to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that an action was commenced against a petty officer belonging to the gang here for breaking open & entering a house. That I had directed a lawyer to defend it, which in your answer you told me their Lordships approved of.

There has been an offer made, that if he, the petty officer, would make a submission, the affair would be dropped.

We had a regular information, a Lieutenant attended also a peace office, but they found no men as they had time to escape. I beg to have their Lordships' directions of the man, should[he] make the Submission required ...to let the tryall go on.

[1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 15 July 1777]

200. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 15 July 1777

Bristol, 15 July 1777

Sir,

The enclosed is a Copy of a Letter sent to the Attorney I employ'd here to defend one of the petty officers who was prosecuted for breaking open a door where we had information of some seamen being secreted. As your name is made use of, I beg to know if you would wish him to make the submission desired, if so it shall be done. I enclose a publick letter that I may have their Lordships directions on it.

I beg leave to return my thanks to you for the part you was so good to take on getting my son appointed to the Plymouth division of Marines.

Enclosure:

Hatton Garden, 8 July 1777

Farrell against Gabriel

I have been attended this evening by Mr. Seddon and his partner or assistant by the directions of Mr. Stephens, Secretary of the Admiralty, to let me know that the

landlord of the Plaintiff was an acquaintance of Mr. Stephen's and carried on the suit for the Plaintiff, had applied to Mt Stephens about the cause, and had told him if the Defendant would make a submission and ask pardon for what he had done there should be an End put to the Cause.

I told them I was only an agent in the cause, that on my writing you that Mr. Seddon did not think it a proper Cause so as to obtain any directions from the Lords of the Admiralty about it. You wrote me back word that your client Mr. Hamilton had the authority of the Admiralty to defend as he told you, and that you relied on Mr. Buller's advice and followed it. And on that I had pleaded. They desired I would write you the proposal made. I asked, suppose the Defendant should submit, who was to pay the costs he had been put to? They seemed to hint as if that might be made easy.

I can't say I understand this Application at all and therefore must submit to your consideration, Yours &c, Thomas Lawes

[1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 15 July 1777]

201. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 19 July 1777

Bristol, 19th July 1777

Sir,

Herewith I send you an Account of the men raised here this week by the officers under my command; also an account of the Men now on board the *Fanny* Tender which you will please to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

I shall, as soon as the wages of the Men we have got from the homeward bound ships can be got, send the *Fanny* Tender round to Plymouth, which I hope will be in a few days. I beg leave to inform their Lordships of the good behaviour & vigilance of Lieutenant Metherell of the *Fanny*, and Lieutenant Gibson of the *Rose*, who did every thing that was possible in procuring the Men we have got under many disadvantages, the Ships Coming up almost all at the same time, & having no sailing boat that might have gone & met them further to the Westward. I shall order the men taken on the *Oliver Cromwell* Rebel Privateer to be delivered to the commanding officer at Plymouth.

Margin: 5 August 1777, own sent & approve of the diligence & activity of Lieutenants Metherell and Gibson.

[1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 19 July 1777]

202. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 17 August 1777

Bristol 17 August 1777

Sir,

The coroner's inquest had sat upon the body of the Man who was killed by the *Fanny*'s people, and have brought in the verdict wilfull murder against John Harrison

one of the people in the boat. As I was apprehensive of a tumult & some disturbance in case the body had been brought up to Bristol, I prevailed with the Coroners to take the inquest on board the *Rose* tender where the body was, and promised to pay the charges that might accrue from their being obliged to go there. I also ordered the body to be carried ashore & buried at St George's, near Kingroad, in a decent & proper manner. I hope their Lordships will approve of what I have done & allow me to charge it to my account.

The two men who were wounded at the same time, one being shott in the Shoulder and the other in the thigh. I have brought[them] ashore and placed then in a room at Lieutenant Katon's rendezvous, where they are attended by a surgeon, and are both in a fair way of doing well.

Herewith I send you an Account of men now on board the *Rose* Tender, which you be pleased to lay before their Lordships.

Margin: approve of what he has done & permit him to charge the expenses to his account

[Adm1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 17 Aug. 1777]

203. The death of a boatswain, 11 August 1777

Extract of a Letter from Bristol, Aug 13.

On Sunday and Monday last arrived in King's Road 17 sail of our Jamaica fleet. As soon as they came in, the tender in the Road dispatched her boats to press the men, when several of the sailors belonging to the fleet got into their boats and were making off for shore, but were pursued by the press-gang who fired upon[them], by which the Boatswain of the *Friendship* was killed on the spot and several others wounded, The tender sailed the next day; but as the fellow is known who shot the Boatswain, it is hoped he will be brought to condign punishment for so gross a violation of the laws of the land. We hear that officers are dispatched to Plymouth to meet the tender on her arrival, and apprehend the delinquents.

[*General Evening Post*, 14–16 August 1777]

Wednesday last[13 August 1777] the Coroner's Inquest was taken at Bristol on the body of James Reynolds, the Boatswain of the *Friendship*, mentioned in last Saturday's paper to have been shot by one of the press-gang in Kingroad, who brought in their verdict wilful murder against a Midshipman, who sailed the next day in the tender for Plymouth.

[*London Chronicle*, 21–23 August 1777.]

*A letter dated, 19 August 1777, by the Admiralty Solicitor, Samuel Seddon, gives an account of the affray at Bristol between a recruiting crew and the people belonging to a ship the *Friendship*. One of the *Friendship's* crew was killed and two dangerously wounded. At the coroner's inquest, the jury brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Harrison, the master of the tender. Seddon thought it would be proper to have depositions taken for

Harrison's case, and put before the Attorney and Solicitor General and the Admiralty council.

[Adm 1/3680 f. 244]

204. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 8 September 1777

Bristol, 8th September 1777

[The following letter is inserted afterwards:]

Fanny Tender, Kingroad, September 27th 1777.

Sir,

I was to the Westward in the Boat when yours of the 25th instant was brought on board, with Inclosed Mr. Stephen's Letters signifying their Lordships Directions to enquire how William Hows and James Barry came to be Impress'd from the ship *Bolton*, as John Scott the Master had a petition to their Lordships, & represented that they were furnished with a Protection and actually in the service of the said Vessel. Beg leave to answer to their Lordships' Information that they were not taken out of the Ship but from a Boat at least three Miles distant from her, under the following circumstances; on my seeing a boat in shore from the Tender, with five hands pulling for the Holes mouth for entrance of Bristol river, I sent after her to know what they were. On this, they attempted to pull from us but could not, but were taken and brought on board. I found three to five able seamen fit for the service and they having nothing to shew to protect them I thought it my duty, after offering them leave to enter as Volunteers, on their refusal to Impress them, particularly as the Excuse they offered for being such a distance from the ship was a very lame one, and such as I thought the Service would not allow one to Admit of. Some hours after this, the master came on board, and told me he had a protection for his Men. I told him I should at all times pay proper respect to the protection, were the Men on board & actually employed on the Vessel Duty, but as I did not understand that sending a Boat from Posset Point to Pill which is six miles with no other pretense than to land a pilot, which[who] might have been put on shore close to the Vessel, was allowed of by that Protection, therefore it was my Duty to take them. He then produced an indenture on one of the three, for three years,[on] which I discharged[him], tho' he appeared to be much older than described. On the master's application to you, Sir, after this, there are the reasons I gave, and which I hope will justify my Conduct to their Lordships. I am, Sir, &c, Anthony Metherell.

PS. Herewith you have also my weekly account of the new raised men on board.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton, 8 Sept. 1777)]

205. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stevens, 5 October 1777

Bristol, 5th October 1777

Enclosure: also Bristol, 5th October 1777

Sir,

I am very sorry to be under the necessity of telling you that I am advised to Bath and salt water and to use horse exercise for the recovery of my Health, which has been for some time extremely indifferent, and though I have been constantly using different medicines, no one has given me partial relief. My complaint is of the Bilious kind, attended with Languor and lowness of Spirits with which I was taken soon after my arrival in Bengal as agent to the *Earl of Ashburnham* Transport with Sir John Clavering and some other Gentlemen of the Council of Bengal. On my return to England in 1776 I found there was a great call for Lieutenants, and ill as I was, I offered my services in hope I should find some benefit from my native air, and I was ordered here under your command to raise Men for His Majesty's Fleet. I now beg you will please to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty with my case, and I hope their Lordships will allow me to retire on my half-pay in order that I may take methods that are the most likely to re-establish my Health. I am with great respect, Dear Sir, &c John Lowder.

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 5 Oct. 1777]

206. Midshipman drowned while impressing at Kingroad, 3 October 1777

On Friday last[17 October 1777] an inquest was taken by the Coroners of this city on the body of Will King, a Midshipman, belonging to the *Fanny* Tender, in Kingroad, when it appeared that he and four other men belonging to the said tender were ordered on Friday 3rd of this month to go on the impress service in an open boat, and the wind blowing strong, it being a tempestuous day, it is supposed they were all drowned, as nothing had been heard of either of them till now.

[*General Evening Post*, 23–25 October 1777; *Daily Advertiser*, 25 October 1777; *Adam's Weekly Courant (Chester)*, 28 October 1777.]

207. Samuel Sedden to Philip Stephens, 7 February 1778

Piccadilly, 7 Feb 1778.

Sir,

Seddon was asked on 20 August “to provide depositions of such witnesses as shall be able to give any Material Testimony on behalf of Thomas Harrison, upon the Subject of an Affray which happened between a Boat's Crew, who were employed under Captain Hamilton in Bristol on the service of raising Men, and the people belonging to the Ship called the *Friendship*, in which one of her people was killed, and two dangerously wounded; in Consequence of which the Coroner's Inquest... had brought in their Verdict, Wilful Murder, against Thomas Harrison.” Seddon was also requested “to lay such Depositions with a State of the Case before the King's Attorney and Solicitor General, and the Council of the Admiralty, for their opinions what are the most advisable steps to be taken for the Defence of the said Mr. Harrison, and such other persons against whom any prosecution or prosecutions shall happen to be commenced, either for the murder of the person above mentioned to be already

dead, or of the other wounded persons, in case they...should happen to die of their wounds. I take the liberty to acquaint you for their Lordship's Information that I accordingly caused the Depositions in writing to be taken of such witnesses as are able to give any material testimony on the said Mr. Harrison's behalf, and laid the same, with a state of the case, before the King's Attorney and Solicitor General, and Mr. Cust, the Council of the Admiralty; and Mr. Cust having given his opinion thereon, I send the same enclosed herewith, ...and as soon as I can procure the Attorney and Solicitor General's opinions, I will immediately transmit the same to you.

...I apprehend Lieutenant Metherell and John Harris, Master, and Richard Hatt and Benjamin Best, mariners, belonging to the *Fanny* Tender will be able to give material evidence on behalf of the said Mr. Harrison, and therefore I humbly submit to your Lordships' consideration whether they will not be pleased to give directions that the said Lieutenant Metherell, John Harris, Richard Hatt and Benjamin Best may be forthcoming in order to their giving Evidence on the Tryal of the said Thomas Harrison at the next assizes ...at the City of Bristol...and also whether or not their Lordships will be pleased to direct me to cause proper measures to be taken for defending the same Thomas Harrison at the Publick Expense."

I am, Sir, &c Samuel Seddon

[Adm 1/3680 f. 303]

208. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 27 December 1777

Bristol, 27th Dec 1777

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of men rais'd here by the Officers under my command & also an account of men now on board the *Rose* Tender, which you will please lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

In Justice to the officers with me on this Service, I must beg that you would inform their Lordships that so many ships sailing at once from this place for the West Indies, at least 40 sail of large ships, has so drained the town of seamen, that there are none to be found at present, in so much that I have been obliged to give Certificates to a Number of the Pilots to carry the Ships over to Cork, who otherwise must have remained here for want of Men."

[Adm 1/1903 (Wm. Hamilton) 27 Dec. 1777]

209. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 26 February 1778

Bristol, 26th Feb 1778

Sir,

Please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that according to their direction of yesterday[I] waited upon the committee of the Subscribers at Bath, who

have granted a Bounty of £3 to every able seaman and 30s to every ordinary seaman and landman. I have settled the mode of disposing of them to the Committee,

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 26 Feb. 1778]

210. Proceedings of the Common Council of Bristol, 16 February 1778

16 February 1778: On the motion of Mr. Mayor, it is unanimously agreed and ordered that a Bounty of Three Pounds for every able seaman, 40 shillings for every ordinary Seaman and 20 shillings for every able bodied Landman (additional to the respective Bounties offered by his Majesty's Royal Proclamation) be paid by this Corporation to such as shall within three Calendar Months from this time enter themselves with the Regulating Captain within this City to service in his Majestie's Navy; And Mr. Chamberlain is to issue monies and pay the same in such manner as shall from time to time be ordered by the Mayor and any two of the Aldermen.

[BRO, M/BCC/CCP/1/15, Bristol Common Council Proceedings 1772–1783, pp 164–5]

211. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 19 March 1778

Bristol, 19th Mar 1778

Sir, You will please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that pursuant to their orders I last Night made a General Impress and have impress about sixty men, but shall tomorrow be particular in their Number and qualifications. I communicated their Lordships orders to Capt Boddington of the *Boston* in Kingroad, that he might do duty there, and ordered Lt. Metherell of the *Fanny* tender to assist the impress on shore. I have not heard from Kingroad what was done there. I have sent down part of the Impress Men on board His Majesty's Tender *Fanny*, and I shall send the remainder tomorrow evening. I am happy to inform their Lordships that the whole was conducted without noise and confusion and no hurt done. You will please inform their Lordships I have had an application from Sir John Durbin the Mayor in behalf of the men impress from the Weekly Market Boats, setting forth the Impossibility of the City being properly supplied with provisions & necessaries in case these people are not protected. I beg their Lordships direction on that head, and shall only observe that they are by no means good men and eight or ten in number.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 19 March 1778]

212. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 22 March 1778

Bristol, 22 March 1778

Sir, Herewith I send the account of the Men rais'd at the General Impress by the officers under my command, and those discharged by my order after examination, being Apprentices within the time, Militia Men, or unserviceable, with an account of

the total Number now on board the *Fanny* Tender, which you will please lay before me Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

You will please inform their Lordships that I have received their Letters by Express, and shall obey their directions in Discharging the men belonging to the Market Boats, and take all the care possible that no bad use is made of their Lordships' indulgence in that matter.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 22 March 1778]

213. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 8 April 1778

Bristol, 8 April 1778

Sir,

Please to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that one William Johnson entered with me as a Landman some time ago, the Adjutant of the North Battalion of the Glostershire Militia has claimed him as a Militia Man. I should have delivered him up, but he had taken up slops & bedding to the amount of £1-3-9d. This they have refused to pay, and I beg their Lordships' directions what I am to do, that the money may not be lost, and I suppose there will be an application made for him to their Lordships'.

Margin: The Admiralty gave directions for the discharge of Mathias Wheelan, chief mate of the *Britannia*. In his next letter, dated 9 April 1778, Captain Hamilton said the reason he had been taken up by Capt. Doddington of the *Boston* was "because he took up two men, one of them a midshipman, who were swimming from the *Boston*, & put them on ashore, who have both deserted." Annotation: let their lordships know not to discharge him.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton), 8, 9 April 1778]

214. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens

Bristol, 18 April 1778.

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 16th with directions...to discharge William Luke and John Mend, two apprentices said to be impressed from the *Aurora*, having Act of Parliament protections from their Lordships and shall accordingly order them to be discharged. But I must beg you will please inform their Lordships of the circumstances how they came to be imprest and kept, having such protections. They had run from the *Aurora* & entered aboard another ship for 55 shillings per month, and their Master desired they might be imprest and gave himself the description of them. I employed a man to discover them and paid him for it, for that reason, after I had taken them, I thought proper to keep them.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton, 18 April 1778)]

215. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 21 April 1778

Bristol, 21st April 1778

Sir,

Please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that this day a Rebel Brigantine was brought in here by the Crew who took her from the Master. She was bound from South Carolina to Nante[Nantes], has in her 76 Hogsheads of Tobacco, 40 Casks of Indigo, and the rest Rice. This in all I could learn, as I have not seen Lieutenant Metherell of the *Fanny* Tender who boarded her and is not yet come up with the papers... I hope tomorrow to transmitt their Lordships more particular intelligence.

Lieutenant Anthony Metherell offered an account in the next letter, dated 23 April. Among other things he remarked:

On our boarding the Brigg off Possett[Portishead Point] found that six of her Hands had got on Shore to the Westward for fear of being impress, so that I have assisted the vessel up to Kingroad and as I think they deserve Indulgence I have given Hill[the mate of the brig] my word that if they come on board I will not take them

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 21, 23 April 1778]

216. An affray in Kingroad, 28 May 1778

Bristol, June 4 1778: On Friday last[28 May 1778] there was a very warm press in this City for Seamen, and the Vessels in the Road were all stripped of their Hands. The Press-Gang attempting to board an outward bound Vessel in Kingroad, were fired upon by the Crew, when one Man was killed on the Spot, and another wounded, and the Boat beat off; but the Tender immediately weighed anchor, came alongside the Vessel, boarded her, and took every one of the Hands.

[*Adam's Weekly Courant*, 9 June 1778.]

***217. Trow crews and impressment, June 1778**

On 5 June 1778, Captain Hamilton was directed by the Admiralty not to impress any of the men belonging to the market boats employed in transporting provisions for the city from Wales, and the mayor to be informed accordingly.

[Adm 3/84, 5 June 1778]

On 12 June 1778 the Mayor of Bristol requested that directions be given to the regulating captain at Gloucester “to forbear pressing any Men belonging to the trows and market Boats employed in carrying provisions and grain to and from that City.” The Board of Admiralty agreed and sent a letter to Sir John Durbin to that effect.

[Adm 3/85, 12 June 1778]

***218. Bristol and its bounties**

13 June 1778: ordered that the bounties given on 16 February 1778 be continued for another three months.

9 December 1778: the bounties were to be continued for another three months.

3 July 1779: the bounties were to be continued for three months longer “from the twenty first of June last”.

18 June 1778: Mayor of Bristol acquainted the Admiralty Board that the Corporation had unanimously agreed to continue the bounty for another 3 months. The Admiralty thanked them for their zeal.

[BRO, M/BCC/CCP/1/15, Bristol Common Council Proceedings, 1772–1783, pp. 173, 191, 202; Adm 3/85]

219. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 11 July 1778

Bristol, 11th July 1778

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of men raised here this week by the officers under my command... You will please to inform their Lordships that Lieutenant Metherell commanding His Majesty's Tender *Fanny* had impress from the Homeward bound ships 96 men, which considering that the Ships came all in the same Tide, was as much as could possibly[be] done, and indeed I think few officers in this situation could have done so much. He was opposed by some of the ships, and received a severe blow from a six pound shott thrown at him whilst he was in the boat, and some of his men, too, were hurt, notwithstanding he took all the men, and would not suffer his own people to fire upon them which they would have done. I have discharged the men into His Majesty's Ship *Medea* at the request of Captain Cornwallis, which I hope their Lordships will approve of, and there now remain ten on board the Tender.

Margin. 16 July: let him know their Lordships highly satisfied with the conduct of Lieutenant Metherell. Let him know their Lordships cannot approve of his parting with the new raised men on board the *Medea*; that he is therefore to apply in future.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 11 July 1778]

***220. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 17 July 1778**

17 July 1778

Hamilton reported “that amongst the men impress by Lieut. Metherell, there were two Apprentices, who by the date of their Indentures had not been the full time, but it appearing by their own confession that they had been at Sea

before they were bound, I have refused to deliver them to their Masters, which I hope will be approved of by their Lordships.

[Adm 1/1904 (William Hamilton) 17 July 1778]

***221. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 12 July 1778**

Bristol, 12 July 1778

Hamilton reported that the owners of the *Alexander* privateer said that some of their crew had been taken up by the press gang and had delayed sailing schedules in the Kingroad. As a result, the owners were threatened with legal action for not paying their men. It was customary to pay the men on the night they actually sailed, but the impressed men demanded their pay.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 12 July 1778]

222. Bristol boys for the navy

15 July 1778 Sir John Durbin had proposed to provide some boys for HM Navy and to clothe them accordingly

[Adm 3/85, 15 July 1778; see also Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 21 July 1778]

223. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 25 July 1778

Bristol, 25 July 1778

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of the men rais'd here this week by the officers under my command...also an Account of the men now on board His Majesty's Tender *Fanny*, who has not yet been able to sail on account of the Wind continuing westerly...the Master of a Vessel just arrived here says that he heard of some French privateers busy off the Lands end, and that they had taken two vessels belonging to Mevagizzy[Mevagissey]. I have therefore as the loss of so many men might be of great detriment to the service, thought proper to apply to Captain Blaikie of His Majesty's Armed Sloop *Three Brothers*, Captain Montague of the *Medea* to convoy his Tender.

*Captain Hamilton continued: "the newly raised men who were returned to the *Fanny* Tender from the *Medea* have been very refractory and have thrown out expressions that they would not be carried round to Plymouth."

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 25 July 1778]

224. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 27 July 1778

Enclosure: Petition of the owners of the *Alexander*, merchants in Bristol, 11 July 1778

Humbly shewth That your petitioners having Victualled and arm'd their ship *Alexander* with an intent to Cruize against the Enemies of Great Britain and having obtained their Lordships Commission, dated 27th January last with a Protection for the said Ship

Your petitioners at great trouble and expense procured near Eighty Men and Boys, and had them on board said Ship, that notwithstanding your Lordships' Protection the Best Men were impress'd out of the said ship three different Times, which hath totally prevented her from proceeding to sea.

That one Thomas Maddox, a Landman who was on board the said Ship, has threatned to oblige them to pay him four months wages, the said ship having laid in Kingroad near four months, with upwards of Fifty Landsmen on board, maintained at great expense.

That the usage and Custom of the Port of Bristol hath been time immemorial that no man actually enters into Pay until the day of the Ships Sailing and Proceeding on his Intended Voyage. And the said ship hath been prevented from sailing by seamen being impress'd out of her into His Majesty's Service, to the owners' great disappointment & expense already incurred. Their Case being peculiarly distressing, your petitioners pray their Lordships will be pleas'd to take their case into consideration to grant them such remedy and assistance by directing the Proctor of the Admiralty to Defend the Matter on your Petitioners behalf, or such other relief as your Lordships shall see fit.

And your petitioners shall ever pray,

James McTaggart, Davis & Protheroe, David Hamilton, Bush, Elton & Bush.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 27 July 1778]

225. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 1 August 1778

Bristol, 1st August 1778

Sir,

You will please to inform their Lordships that his Majesty's Tender [*Fanny*], Lieut Metherell, sailed yesterday for Plymouth with 184 new raised men, and that His Majesty's Ships *Medea* & *Three Brothers* sailed at the same time. I directed Lieut. Metherell to put part of the new rais'd men on board their Ships both on account of their ease and safety.

*Letter of 5 August 1778 reveals that Hamilton ordered Metherell to put 50 men on the *Three Brothers* and to retrieve them at Plymouth.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 1, 5 Aug. 1778]

***226. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 31 August 1778**

Hamilton enclosed a petition from four of the gangsmen and recommended that they be paid to same as the other men “which they certainly deserve, as they have been very careful and diligent in the discharge of their duty.”

“ Bristol, august ye 28th, 1778

Sir, Wee beg Leave to Lay our case before you and hopes you will be so good as the consider us and the hardship wee now Labour under and grant us relief yourselfe or be pleased to lay or case before the lords Commissioners of the admiralty.

Wee agreed with Lieutenant Katon when we first came into the service and before there was any Impress to serve with him in the business of procuring men for his majesty’s service and to receive beside our subsistence able pay for the time we should serve, being then time of peace when the Impress began and men could not be got to serve in the gang for so low wages we hoped that we should have been put upon a footing with the rest of the gang, as we have always done our duty Equally with them and as well, for we appeal to yourself and both the Lieutenants. But having now being paid received only able pay, we hope you will take into consideration our services and the wants of our families which we find it very difficult to maintain now times are so dear and be pleased to put us on a footing with the rest of the gang and your petitioners shall every pray, John Smith, Thomas Bird, Thomas Elleson, Charles Thomas.”

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm Hamilton) 31 August 1778]

227. Michael Miller, Jnr., Master of the Merchant Venturers, to the Lords of the Admiralty, 22 August 1778

Merchants Hall, Bristol, August 22nd, 1778

My Lords,

The owners of ships belonging to this Port, as well Merchantmen as Privateers, find themselves under a difficulty after they have obtained your Lordship’s protection for their ships crew to get the men from their respective Lodgings and places of abode on board the ships, because in their way they find themselves liable to be impressed & on this account the Ships’ Voyages & Cruizes are delayed. I am therefore desired to request your Lordships to give leave to the Regulating Captain at this port to grant protections to such men as shall have entered themselves on board any ship belonging to the port to go unmolested from their Lodgings and places of abode to such Ships as have general protections in all cases where the regulating Captain shall be satisfied that no abuse is made of such a protection.

I have the honor to be, &c Michael Miller, Master.

[BRO, SMV 2/4/1/1]

228. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 19 September 1778

Bristol, 19th September 1778

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of men raised here this week by the Officers under my Command. Also an account of Men now on board His Majesty's Tender *Spry*...

You will please to inform their Lordships that the *Spry* had the misfortune to have her bowsprit carried away by a Ship falling on board her. As soon as she has got another which will be in two of three days, I shall order her to Plymouth with the new rais'd men.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 19 Sept. 1778]

229. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 30 September 1778

Bristol 30th September 1778

Sir,

In answer to your letter of the 24th ...John Trott was on board the *Civil Usage* Rebel Privateer when she took the ship *Dover* bound from Oporto to London, in which Ship he was put Prize Master's mate to carry her to America, but the *Dover* being retaken by the *Levant*, a Letter of Marque[privateer] from this port, he and another man were kept in her & sent to Bristol, and then by the magistrates put in prison on a Charge against them of Piracy in November 1777, since which time they have been so confined. As he sets forth of having been obliged to serve, from the best information I can get it seems probable that he was at the beginning of the troubles prest into their army, from which he deserted, and then, not knowing what to do, entered on board the privateer, for I cannot think he was prest...or they would not have intrusted him with a prize. They are both of them stout young men, fit for the service & willing as they say to serve His Majesty.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm Hamilton) 30 Sept. 1778]

230. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 19 October 1778

Bristol 19 October 1778

Sir,

I have received your Letter with His Majesty's pardon for John Trott, which I have presented to the Sheriffs, and am to have them out of prison tomorrow. Herewith I send you a petition from John Pearson, who was confined at the same time & for the same reason by the Mayor of this City and I believe the circumstances of the case are nearly the same.

I am, Sir, &c W Hamilton

Enclosure: To the Right Honorable the Earle of Sandwich

The Petition of John Pearson most humbly sheweth

That your petitioner having been long confin'd in this Goal[Gaol] as a prisoner of war, and being desirous of entering into His Majesty's Navy most humbly hopes your Lordship will take his unhappy case into Consideration and send an order to Capt. Hamilton to deliberate[sic] him from this prison and admit him to return to his Allegiance. And your Petitioners will be for ever in Duty Bound to pray,

John Pearson, Newgate, October 18th 1788

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 19 Oct. 1778]

231. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 4 November 1778

Bristol, 4 November 1778

Sir,

Lieutenant Katon having imprest a Man, the Master of the Vessel he was prest from produced indentures made in Ireland for him as a three-year apprentice, but he had no Admiralty protection, the man's near 30 years of age and was bound 30 August 1777. I beg their Lordships' directions if I am to keep him or not.

Margin. 6 Nov. If he had never used the sea before he was bound apprentice, the Master has a right for his discharge.

[Adm 1/1904 (Wm. Hamilton) 4 Nov. 1778]

232. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 6 February 1779

Bristol 6 Feb 1779

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of men raised here this week...also an account of the men now on board the *Fanny* tender...

Please to inform their Lordships that I have ordered the *Fanny* Tender to Milford[Haven] with the new raised men for the *Culloden* but if not wanted to proceed directly to Plymouth, Captain have wrote to me of his Want of Board & Beer. I have sent him as much as the *Fanny* could take & the rest by a ship belonging to Mr. Cliborn of Haverford West, who carried it freight free.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 6 Feb. 1779]

233. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 11 February 1779

Bristol 11th February 1779

Sir,

His Majesty's Tender *Fanny*, Lieutenant Whiston, sailed yesterday for Milford[Haven], with 60 new raised Men, ten Boys and 15 American prisoners. She

and another vessel going there carried for the *Culloden* 20 tons bread and 15 Tons Beer.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm Hamilton) 11 Feb. 1779]

234. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 12 February 1779

Bristol, 12th Feb 1779

Sir,

On Wensday (sic) evening, an information having been given at the Rendezvous of some Seamen being secreted in a publick house, one of the petty officers went to look after them with a party of the Gang. On his coming to the house, they retired into a room and declared they would not be prest but would fire upon the first men who should attempt to come in. He immediately broke the door open, upon which two pistols were fired, which killed him. As he had gone on this service without even acquainting the Lieut. of it, and had no Civil officer with him, the Coroner's inquest who sat upon the body brought in the verdict self defence.

I have taken up three of the Men who were in the room when it was done, and have sent them on board the Tender, but should be glad to have their Lordships' directions if I am to prosecute this matter further.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 12 Feb. 1779]

235. A newspaper account of the affray of 10 February 1779

Bristol Feb 17. Last night died at his lodgings in Princess Street, Lieut Katon, on the impress service.

Wednesday evening[10 February] the press-gang in this city having received intelligence that a number of sailors were assembled at the Boar's Head, public house, at the foot of Redcliff-hill, proceeded to the place in order to impress them. The sailors were armed with pistols and cutlasses in their defence, and on the gang's forcing into the room where they were, they instantly discharged some pistols at them, when Mr. Farrel, who kept the Shakespeare at the Gibb, and headed the gang, was fatally wounded, for he died early the next morning. After the pistols were fired, they began to use cutlasses, and in the affray one of the press gang had his ear cut off and several others wounded – but the gang at last became superior to the sailors and carried off two of three of them.

[*Gazetter and New Daily Advertiser*, 20 Feb 1779]

236. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 22 February 1779

Bristol 22nd February 1779

Sir,

...there are now in prison at the place, for debt, four able Seamen who are willing to service His Majesty. I can get them out for paying the bounty of five pounds for each, which I beg to know if their Lordships will please allow to do.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 22 Feb. 1779]

237. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 24 April 1779

Bristol 24th April 1779

Sir,

You will please lay the Letter I herewith send you from the Magistrates of this City before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I may receive their orders thereupon. I have only to say that the Men they desire to be discharged are not seamen, being either old men or Cogs only used to that trade, and whom I was ordered to discharge on the last impress. There are not above 7 or 8 of them

Margin: direct him to discharge them.

Enclosure: Council House, April 24th 1779

Sir,

Complaint having this day been made to the Magistrates of this City that the crews of some of the vessels usually employed in Bringing Provisions to the Markets of this City were on Wednesday night last impressed into his Majesty's Service and as several Ships with Corn and other Common Vessels are daily expected here and if their Men are not protected this large City will be in the utmost distress. We are under the necessity of requesting that you will lay this Complaint before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and represent to them that in the present as in all former wars the Crews of Market Boats and Vessels bringing Corn to this City have been protected. We are, Sir, &c

Morgan Smith, Isaac Baugh, Thomas Harris, Charles Hotchkin.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 24 April 1779]

238. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 25 April 1779

Bristol, 25 April 1779

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of Men rais'd here last week by the officers under my command, also an account of the men now on board the *Rose* Tender... You will please inform their Lordships that as His Majesty's Ship *Crescent* was in the Road, I ordered Lieut. Lane of the *Rose* Tender to assist on shore in the command of Lieut. Katon's gang. There are no Vessels filling out here at present and as the Seamen keep constantly in Kingswood and not in the Town, very few men could be got. The badness of the weather as it has for some days blown a hard gale of Wind, hindered

me from going to Kingswood to regulate the 36 men impress there. As soon as I can I shall send the return to their Lordships. I find the *Fanny* Tender has been ordered from Plymouth to Guernsey, to carry prisoners to Portsmouth where she now is. I therefore propose to put the new rais'd men on board the *Crescent* & carried around to Plymouth, if no other Tender arrives in Kingroad before she sails.

Enclosure: Account of the men raised by HM Officers at Bristol, 17 April to 24 May 1779

6 volunteers (1 able 1 ordinary, 4 landmen) 22 impressed (5 able, 15 ordinary, 2 landman) 2 sent by civil officers: total 30.

Hamilton reported that on 8 May Captain Hope of the *Crescent* frigate sailed for Plymouth with 100 newly raised men (14 able seamen, 32 ordinary seamen, 54 landmen).

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 25 April, 8 May 1779]

239. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 23 May 1779

Bristol, 23rd May 1779

Sir, I beg you will inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that as the Jamaica convoy has been for some time hence expected home, I thought it necessary to hire a Sailing Skiff to go to the Westward to hinder the Vessels from putting their men on Shore before they come up to Kingroad, as is the usual practice. I have already experienced the good effects of it and got above 20 men who would all have gone on Shore. I hope their Lordships will approve of it and allow me to keep her for the summer.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 23 May 1779]

240. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 10 June 1779

Bristol 10 June 1779

Sir,

Herewith I transmit you a Letter from the Master of his Majesty's Tender *Fanny*... complaining of Lieut. Whiston, who commands the Tender, which I beg you will please lay before ...the Admiralty.

Enclosure.

Kingroad, *Fanny* tender, June 1779

William Fox to Capt. Hamilton

I must acknowledge I am not so well acquainted in this Service as I hope to be in future, therefore must humbly intreat you will be pleased to overlook any propriety in this Address, for my situation is so very distressing... pleased to communicate this matter to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. God only knows the consequence.

That Lieutenant John Whiston, who has the Command of my vessel, has behaved in such an Outrageous Drunken manner & made use of such Tyranny and Oppression on Board towards me as master and owner; and in his drunken fitts has beet[beaten] my mate and has threatened me the same and hastened me out of my cabbin to tack forward among the common men and has often threatened my life and at different times he is quite out of his mind to a state of that of being raving mad whether from Liquor I can't tell. He has attempted to jump overboard but has been prevented. On the 29th of May he threw himself out of the cabin windows over Board to drown himself, but was taken up by the *Rose* Tender's Boat. His Drunkenness and Ill behaviour to me I made known to my Lord Shuldhham. He told me the Tender was wanted on his Station therefore he could not suspend him there, but when I came to Kingroad he desired me to make you acquainted with his behaviour and that you would acquaint the Lords of the Admiralty.

I have been at a great expense to fit my vessel for this service and I hope to continue in it, but I hope their Lordships will take it into consideration and appoint any officer to command the Tender. I am, Sir, &c Wm. Fox

Margin: 2nd July, Let him know that their Lordships have ordered Lieutenant Wm Springthorpe to supersede Lt. Whiston, who may be expected in Bristol in a few days.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 10 June 1779]

241. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 17 June 1779

Bristol, 17th June 1779:

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have imprest one William Lewis, a freeman of this City. He has been demanded as such by the Mayor, which I have refused, but beg to have their Lordships' directions in that affair, whether I should deliver him up or keep him.

Margin: let him know that their Lordships do not apprehend that his being a Freeman exempts him from being impressed into H.M. Service if he was in other respects liable...& that therefore he is not to deliver him up.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 17 June 1778]

242. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 25 June 1779

Bristol, 25th June 1779

Sir,

You will please inform ...the Admiralty that I have taken upon me, by the advice of Sir John Durbin, Mayor, to discharge William Lewis, the Imprest Man who was claimed as a freeman of the City of Bristol. The Corporation and Merchants are to

meet on Saturday in order to address His Majesty, as there are some people here willing to obstruct such a Measure or at, or at least to Clogg it with Limitations, Sir John thought they had better not have this Matter of Contention before them at this time.¹³ I have for that reason discharged him, not as a freeman of the City of Bristol, but as having left off the going to Sea some time, & settled to his trade of a sailmaker which he was bred to, and which is indeed true. However, if their Lordships disapprove of what I have done, I can easily take him up again.

I am, Sir, &c, W. Hamilton

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm Hamilton) 25 June 1779]

243. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 25 June 1779

Bristol, 25th June 1779

Sir,

...I received an information Cann Wilkins Esq, a Justice of the Peace for Somerset, desiring him to impress four men belonging to Pill as idle and disorderly persons fit to serve His Majesty. Lt. Lane pressed three of them, one of whom I immediately discharged as unserviceable. This occasioned a great stir at Pill, and they declared they could neither carry up or down any ship or vessell. They sent me a petition signed by a great number of the Principals among them, and I was applied to by the Master of Merchants Hall. I told him, if he would call Hall, and they should find those men absolutely necessary for the service of the port, I would on an official letter from him Discharge them. A Hall met and I received a letter from the Master requesting only the discharge of one of them, which I immediately complied with, & hoped their Lordships will not disapprove of it. William Parsons, the other was judged proper to serve His Majesty. I shall not therefore discharge without their Lordships' orders.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm Hamilton) 25 June 1779]

244. The Impressment of Captain Caton, 12 July 1779

Monday noon the press gang, headed by a lieutenant, appeared on the Exchange whilst the gentlemen were assembled on business, and at length seized on the person of Capt. James Caton, formerly master and owner of several vessels but for some years past has declined the employment, and become a resident of this city. So uncommon a circumstance soon drew a concourse together, and his friends interposed for his immediate release, but without effect: he was therefore conducted to the rendezvous & closely confin'd with an order that no person shou'd be admitted

¹³ At this point in time Bristol was politically divided over the war with America. On Common Council the ministerial party failed to muster support for a loyal address to the throne in late June and early July 1779. Local bounties to encourage naval enlistment continued, but in August 1779 George Daubeny failed to persuade the corporation to subscribe £2000 for naval recruitment. At Merchants' Hall, the ministerialists had better success. They carried an address supporting the war by 16 votes to ten. See BRO, M/BCC/CCP/1/15, 26 June, 3 July 1779; SMV/2/1/2/4, 26 June 1779.

to him, and the same evening was conveyed on board the tender lying in Kingroad. Application was made that night to the Mayor for his interposition and the next day a court of Aldermen was summoned on the occasion. Capt. Hamilton (the regulating Captain) attended, and refused to give him up unless order'd by the Admiralty, that he had only discharg'd his duty and wou'd abide the consequences.

[*Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 17 July 1779.]

The following very extraordinary circumstance now engages the conversation of all ranks of people in this city: Captain Kayton, a very respectable and worthy man, and who was for many years in the service of some of the first merchants in this city, but having acquired a very competent fortune, and being far advanced in years, had retired from the employment, being on the public Exchange of this City on Monday last, was seized by a large party of the press gang. Captain Kayton and some gentlemen who happened to be standing near him, alarmed and astonished at this unprovoked insult, remonstrated very warmly with the Lieutenant of the gang, on the impropriety of the act he was committing, but to no purpose, he and his gang insisting on his going with them, saying they had orders for that purpose. The poor man not chusing to comply (notwithstanding he saw himself surrounded by this lawless banditti) made some little resistance, upon this they dragged him from the Exchange to a house of confinement in Princes street. Many of his friends solicited an interview with him during his confinement, but in vain; and on the serving of the tide in the afternoon of the same day, he was conveyed into Kingroad and put on board a tender, where he now remains. The conduct of the regulating Captain exceeds every thing that has ever happened in this city; the resentment of the people seems to be roused, and we flatter ourselves that the most spirited measures will be adopted to obtain a legal redress of an injury so complicated and severe.

[*London Evening Post* 13–15 July 1779; *St James's Chronicle* 15–17 July 1779; *Gazetteer* 16 July 1779]

245. Legal action on behalf of Captain Caton, 14–15 July 1779

Bristol July 17: Wednesday two gentlemen went express to London to sue out a writ of Habeas Corpus to bring Mr Caton before Lord Mansfield. They waited on Mr Burke, one of our Representatives in Parliament, who gave them the most essential assistance. Thursday morning Mr. Dunning, our Recorder, moved Lord Mansfield in open Court for the writ, and his Lordship declared it did not require a moment's hesitation, and he ordered it accordingly. The gentlemen who went for the writ accompanied Mr. Burke to the Admiralty. A Board was then sitting, and their Lordships were informed of the steps which had been taken in consequence of the seizure and imprisonment of Mr. Caton, upon which their Lordships sent an order by the gentlemen to Capt. Hamilton to release Mr. Caton immediately, and to give him a certificate that he was released by their Lordships' order. He was in consequence thereof released from the tender last night at seven o'clock.

[*Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 17 July 1779; *London Evening Post*, 17–20 July 1779; *Public Advertiser*, 21 July 1779.]

246. Captain Caton's own account of his impressment, 20 July 1779

The following is a plain narrative of the wanton and illegal attack on the rights of the people, in my person.

On Monday the 12th of this instant, July, about one o'clock, while transacting my business on the Exchange, I was violently seized by lieutenant Lane and a press-gang under his command. Astonished at so unexpected an attack, I demanded the reason of it, and was answered only by oaths and imprecations, and required to go with them. Surrounded by such a band of ruffians, I saw resistance was in vain, and I submitted. Mr. P. Farr attempting to speak to me was told by Mr. Lane, the lieutenant, that if he did not keep off he would shoot him with his pistol. They conducted me with fury, and in the most ignominious manner to their prison, or house of confinement in Princess Street, where I was immediately locked in a nasty stinking room, the chimney place of which appeared to be the common sink of those who had before been confined there. Soon after I was forced into this horrid room, one of the gang told me that Mr. Lane, the lieutenant, had sent me a *shilling* to buy victuals if I wanted any. I told him to take the shilling back with a reply that I wanted none of his money, having enough of my own.

I was told that many of my friends had been to see me, but that they were refused admittance. Capt. Hamilton came, and asked if I had any business with him. I told him I wanted to know the reason of this strange outrage on my person, that I wished to see my friends as I had many affairs of consequence in an unsettled state. He told me I was fit to serve the king, and that I should not see any of my friends till I was on board the tender. I then desired liberty to go before Sir John Durbin, the mayor. He replied, the *mayor has no business with it*. I was then about the state to him the hardship of being torn from my connections and friends, when he insolently turned off and left me. I would have followed him, but one of the gang gave me a push, which made me retire, and the door was bolted. Sometime after, Mr. Lane and another Lieutenant came into the room, when I complained of the cruelty of being refused a sight of my friends. Mr. Lane said I should not see any of them, but Mr. Springthorpe, the other Lieutenant, said they should be permitted to come and see me when I was on board. About six o'clock, I was taken from this place of confinement, in the same brutal manner I was conducted there, and was forced into a boat at the Gibb. Mr. Farr being there at the time, and attempting again to speak to me, Mr. Lane rudely told him to stand off- that his people should not be interrupted. He, however, spoke sufficiently loud for me to hear him advise me to keep up my spirits, and that I should have redress. I was then carried into Kingroad, on board the tender. While I was there, Mr. Tripp the midshipman and the serjeant of marines behaved with the civility and humanity of men, and endeavouring to make my imprisonment as comfortable as they could, I have reason to believe the lieutenant Springthorpe and the master Keagan would have behaved equally civil but for the severity of the orders of captain Hamilton, whose whole conduct in this business has confirmed him in my mind the enraged partisan and the man of inhumanity. On the morning of Tuesday, about seven o'clock, my friends P. Farr, Mullet and Davis, came in a boat to the tender, and demanded to see me, as they wanted to consult me about my affairs, but they were peremptorily refused admittance, and could not prevail either to see or to speak to me.

I had no information of this visit till seven o'clock, and then accidentally from one of the common men. This was the most unaccountable, as I had before been

promised that my friends should be admitted. I was kept prisoner till Friday the 16th instant, when I was released about seven in the evening, in consequence of a writ of habeas corpus, which my friends had obtained from Lord Mansfield, and an express order from the Lords of the Admiralty.

Nothing can more strongly mark captain Hamilton's personal resentment than his conduct on receiving the order for my release, which was about one o'clock on Friday. He was mortified and confounded, and would not give a satisfactory answer to the gentlemen who attended him with a letter from the Admiralty. My friends were obliged to renew their application for the order; and not till my attorney threatened him with an immediate representation of his conduct to the board, could he prevail with him to deliver it. Alarmed at the resolution of my friends, and fearing the consequences, he at length reluctantly complied, after wantonly detaining me a prisoner several hours, in direct disobedience of his orders.

I think it incumbent on me to state these plain facts to the public, for their full information. Who the malignant and despicable wretches were that prevailed on Captain Hamilton to order Mr Lane to commit so violent and so unprecedented an outrage on my person I am not anxious to know. It is sufficient for me that the principal actors in this scene of oppression are known, and that the *laws* will vindicate my wrongs.

As to the many base reports which have been circulated respecting me, I can only say in general they are INFAMOUS and FALSE.

The fabrication of charges against me deduced only from the free and undesigning conversation of unsuspecting convivial moments, and published at a time when I was a *close prisoner* and it was asserted that I should never be at large to answer for myself, is sufficient to convince every man of the inveterate malice of my enemies. And I ought also to be known that to *malice* they have united the most compleat *hypocrisy*; for from their general behaviour, I was unconscious of having an enemy till I found myself a prisoner, and I most firmly believe if these fabricators of *falsehood* had for a moment entertained an idea of my release every malignant story with which the town has been amused to ruin my character would have remained in those *black hearts* where they have already been so long concealed!

On my release I appealed to the magistrates at the Council-House, and have every day since attended the public Exchange. Conscious of my innocence and integrity, I defy the tongue of slander and fear no enquiry.

[*Morning Chronicle*, 26 July 1779; *Public Advertiser*, 27 July 1779]

***247. A newspaper skirmish over Captain Caton's impressment, July 1779**

"Contemptor," in a letter of 27 July 1779 to the *Morning Chronicle*, 28 July 1779, took issue with a "Mr. Observer" of Devonshire street, who declined to say whether Caton was impressed illegally, which he thought only the law could determine. "Observer" noted that Captain Hamilton said he had orders to impress Caton.

"However the impressing of men may be, it is generally confessed, that expediency may, in some measure, warrant the act; but giving *orders* to impress *that man* must be regarded as a stab to the constitution that every English ought to resent. Mr Caton is not of the description of men that are

commonly impressed, nor was he taken up by mistake, at night, strolling about the streets, like a L---d C-----r.¹⁴ It is plain that he was proscribed from daring to declare his sentiments, which proscription (with allowances for the humanity of the times and the nature of the constitution) must be seen in as odious and horrid a light as any of those in the time of Nero. If all be true that you lay to Mr. Caton's charge, why impress him? Why not execute him? On his being regularly tried, his peers would find him *guilty* or *not guilty*, that he should either be acquitted, therefore, or hung on a gibbet sixty feet high... The regular course of the law is tedious, but dragging a man from his home, his wife and his children, and concerns, is a short method of deterring people from opening their mouths, and it is adopted by our Ministry from its being the practice of every despotic government; to which state they are endeavouring, as fast as possible, to bring this devoted country.

[*Morning Chronicle*, 22 July 1779.]

248. Captain Caton's legal suit against the impress officers, August 1780

Yesterday[29 August 1780] at our assizes came on a trial before Sir George Nares and a special jury, in which Mr. Caton, formerly master of a vessel in the merchants employ, was plaintiff, and Captain Hamilton and Lieutenant Lane of the impress service of this city, defendants. The action was brought by Mr. Caton for being violently and illegally seized by the press-gang under the defendants' direction on the public Exchange, dragged from thence to the rendezvous house, and shortly after conveyed on board a tender lying in Kingroad, where he was closely confined, and denied the sight of his friends, till released by an order of the Lords of the Admiralty.

The Court was much crowded on the occasion; and after a close investigation of the matter, which lasted seven hours, the Jury withdrew for a considerable time to deliberate on the circumstances, and at length delivered their verdict for the plaintiff, with £150 damages and costs of the suit.

[*Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 2 September 1780]

249. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 12 July 1779

Adm 1/1905 (Wm Hamilton)
Bristol, 12th July 1779

Sir, I beg to offer some things to your Lordships' consideration relative to the state of the Impress Service in this place, in hopes of carrying on with more efficacy for His Majesty's Service.

It has allways been the practice for the homeward bound ships to land their Men to the Westward who march through the Country to Kingswood. This the Masters think

¹⁴ This likely refers to the anecdote that Lord Chancellor Thurlow, when Attorney General, dressed as a sailor and was taken up by the press gang. See John Lord Campbell, *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia, 1851), 5:510.

themselves indispensably obliged to do that they may more easily get men when they go out and it is not possible for any tender lying in Kingroad to prevent. Little, too, can even be done there by a single tender, as they come home with convoy, and most probably come all into the road the same tide. I would therefore propose to your Lordships that a Lieutenant be stationed at Ilfracombe and shall have two or three skiffs with him, to be kept either cruising or upon the lookout, and when the ships arrive to come up with them, keeping between them and the shore to hinder the men getting off. As they are mostly ships of force, they would not probably let them come on board, but their keeping company would answer the end. I think there should be a ship of some force in Kingroad and a gunship, commanded by a Lieutenant, both to guard the Tenders and overawe the ships of force, as also to receive the men who might be[put] on board her safely and between decks, instead of being put into a pressroom, which the Sailors are greatly averse to, and indeed with reason. By this means I could send the Tenders oftener around with fewer men at a time, which would be a great advantage to the service. I would also propose to their Lordships a sloop of war, of force, to cruize off the Island of Lundy. There is tolerable good anchoring there in a westerly wind, and few ships could pass without being seen. I could easily send a Tender to carry round what Men she might get, if it would not be thought proper to have two to relieve one another. This I think would be the most effectual way to get the men coming into this port, and if it meets with your Lordships' approbation, the sooner it is put into execution the better, as the West India convoys are now on their way home. I shall only againe beg leave to observe that most of the ships from this port now, are ships of force, and the men are resolute, it would therefore require a superior force to prevent bloodshed, which I am sure your Lordships would be sorry should happen.

The *Rose* tender sailed last Wensday with one Hundred Men. I then wrote to Lord Shuldham to send back The *Three Brothers* armed vessel with orders to cruize off Lundy. Another Tender is much wanted. I have now near fifty men on board the *Fanny* Tender, but having no other vessel cannot sail away if another Tender cannot be spared. I could get one her ready in a few days.

Margin. 16 July 1779. 1. Approve of the proposition & direct him to recommend a Lieutenant proper to be employed on that Tender. 2. Their Lordships have no ships of this kind to spare, direct him to enquire what vessel proper for the purpose could be hired and fitted in Bristol & upon what terms. 3 direct him to hire one upon the best & cheapest terms he can...

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm Hamilton) 12 July 1779]

Captain Hamilton leased from William Randolph a brigantine of 246 tons, for £156 a month with the Admiralty paying £41-0s to the master for victuals.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 22, 26 July 1779]

250. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 30 July 1779

Bristol, 30 July 1779

My Lord, I beg leave to lay before their Lordships the Inclosed Letter to me from the owners of the *Mars* Private Ship of War and to beg your Lordships' directions what I am to do. In justice to the Gentlemen concerned, I take the liberty to assure your Lordships that the contents of the Letter are strictly true, that she is perhaps one of the most compleat vessels ever built, and in all appearance must be an exceeding fast sailer...in the efforts I made to get the Men from Kingroad, I was assisted by several of the owners, nor did they send down their Ships, nor advertise for men, till all the hopes I had were over. I will also beg leave to observe to your Lordship that the Sailors have got such a notion of this ship as a Privateer that the men will be got whilst she is expected to go to sea. I therefore think it will be no hindrance to His Majesty's Service to allow her to Man.

I have the pleasure to inform your Lordship that this morning the Leeward Island Convoy arrived all safe in Kingroad. They parted from the fleet under the convoy of the *St Albans*...twenty leagues to the westward of Scilly, all well near 250 sail.

Enclosure:
Bristol, 30 July 1779.

Sir,

Our new Privateer *Mars* being now completely fitted, and exclusive of her Complement...ready for sea, we shall be exceedingly oblig'd to you to transmit the following Character of her to the Lords of the Admiralty. She is a Complete Frigate 96 feet Keel & 28 feet Beam, Sheathed with Copper, mounting 30 Carriage guns, 22 of which are Twelve Pounders now on Deck, & we intend she shall carry 150 Men. Built by James Hilhouse, his Majesty's Builder here as an enlarged Plan of the *Ceres* Sloop of War & there is all the Probability of her proving one of the fastest Sailing Ships in Great Britain. Permit us to add, we have deferred shipping any men for her till you have try'd every effort to get the men for His Majesty's Service in the Neighbourhood of the City, which we are sorry did not prove more effectual. We hope on your Representation of our Situation to the Lords of the Admiralty they will be pleas'd to grant us Liberty to man the ship, as from her Superiority to Privateers in general, she is likely to prove a public Benefit, as to the private People concerned.

We are, respectfully, Sir, your obedient humble servants, Thomas Easton, Bush, Elton & Bush, Thomas Hobbs, Richard Vaughan and John Chilcott

Margin: the Admiralty was not prepared to offer protections from impressment to this privateer.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 30 July 1779]

251. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 21 August 1779

Bristol 21 August 1779

Sir, You will please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have now here above sixty new rais'd men and beg your Lordships' direction if I shall send them away on the tender as usual or if I shall send them by Land to Portsmouth which I think may be done by hiring a Waggon, and they may get there in three days.

Margin: Not to sail any Tender should the Enemy Fleet cruise in Channel but to carry the Men in a waggon as he has proposed.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 21 Aug. 1779]

252. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 28 August 1779

Bristol, 28th August 1779

Sir,

You will please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that in consequence of their direction I had prepared to send the supernumeraries down to Portsmouth, and they were to sett off Monday morning, but as it now seems certain that the Enemys Fleet have left the Channel, I shall send them in the Tender for their great security as usual, if not directed otherwise by their Lordships on which Account the Tender shall stay till Wensday when I may receive an Answer on this. I have now 85 new rais'd Man. I am, &c W Hamilton.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 28 Aug. 1779]

253. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 14 September 1779

Bristol 14 September 1779

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that two Wagons will sett off at day light tomorrow for Southampton with eighty rais'd men: 14 able seamen, 43 ordinary seamen, 23 Lord Mayor's men, under the care of Lieutenant Richard Fowler and Lieutenant William Springthorpe. I have wrote to the Regulating Officer at Southampton to apprise him of their coming.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 14 Sept. 1779]

254. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 30 September 1779

Bristol 30th September 1779

Sir, You will please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that there are on board His Majesty's Tenders in Kingroad the new rais'd men, 53 able seamen, 93 ordinary, and 14 Landsmen. I have ordered the *Fanny & Rose* Tenders to proceed with them to Plymouth, and at the same time have directed Lieut. Springthorpe to take any Coasting Vessels, who may choose it, under his Convoy, Several, & particularly three timber barges having applied to me for that purpose which I hope their Lordships will approve of.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 30 Sept. 1779]

***255. The returns of the grand press of the summer, 1779**

The Admiralty gave a return of the first grand press, where all protections, including those guaranteed by statute, were ignored. The numbers were as follows: London 517; Thames to sea 200; Ipswich 46; Harwich 30; Lynn 126; Yarmouth 370; Hull 420; Newcastle 376; Whitehaven 382; Liverpool 442; Lancaster 142; Chester 96; Bristol 640; Ports on the north and south coast of the Bristol Channel 382; Cornish ports 380; Plymouth 180; Exeter &c 390; Bridport, Weymouth, Poole &c 500; Spithead and Portsmouth 200; Ports from thence to Margate 760 Total 6,579.

[*Public Advertiser*, 3 July 1779]

256. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 23 October 1779

Bristol, 23 October 1779

Sir,

You will please inform...the Admiralty that His Majesty's Tenders *Fanny* and *Rose* sailed yesterday for Plymouth with 180 new rais'd men on board, 54 able seamen, 85 ordinary, & 41 Lord Mayor's Men. You will also please to inform their Lordships that in consequence of an Application from the Masters of Coasting Vessels bound to the ports in Cornwall and round Land['s End] I ordered Lieut. Springthorpe of His Majesty's Tender *Fanny* to take such as were ready to sail under the Convoy. Thirteen have taken the benefit of the convoy, six of which are loaded with timber for His Majesty's Dock yard at Plymouth. I hope their Lordships will approve of it.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 23 Oct. 1779]

257. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 30 October 1779

Bristol, 30th October 1779

Sir,

Herewith I send you an account of Men rais'd this week... also the number now on board his Majesty Tender, *Albion*, which you will please to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. You will please inform their Lordships that the *Fanny* and *Rose* Tender were obliged to put in at Milford[Haven], but as the wind is now Northerly, I am in hopes they are gone. You will please to observe to their Lordships that there are now 33 new rais'd men on board the *Albion*, and if it should be full before the Arrival of the other Tenders, that there is no Lieutenant yet appointed for her, that as their Lordships had desired, I had recommended Lieutenant Obadiah Newell of the *William* Armed Ship as a man both well acquainted with the Impress Service & the Bristol Channel.

Margin to be appointed and to repair to him without waiting to be relieved.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 30 Oct. 1779]

258. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 19 November 1779

Bristol 19 November 1779

Sir,

You will please to inform my Lords...of the Admiralty that pursuant to their directions I have hired two more Skiffs and put them under the direction[of] Lieut. Nash at Ilfracombe, to be employed in watching the ships as they come up the Channel, and accompanying them to Kingroad to prevent the seamen from going on Shore to the Westward, that I am in hopes they will in a great measure be able to effect, as the Skiff employed by their Lordships' commission in the summer was of great use. The terms on which I have hired them are: £12 per month, the owner to find a Master Pilot, Equipment of all Sorts, & 4 swivels[swivel guns]. I have put them under a Petty Officer to be paid the same as on shore, and five men to be paid able pay and fifteen pence per day subsistence. I have hired some small arms for them and beg their Lordships' directions if I shall buy any extras, which I can do cheap, or get them from the Ordnance from Plymouth. They are very fine vessels, full deck'd, with good accommodations for men, and excellent sea boats. I hope their Lordships will approve of what I have done on this. I have studied Economy as much as possible or as the Nature of the Service would admit.

Margin: Admiralty approved of this

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm. Hamilton) 19 Nov. 1779]

259. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 5 February 1780

Bristol, 5th February 1780

Sir,

You will please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that a declaration if filed against me & Lieut. Lane by James Caton by which he intends to try the cause in London, but we have this Night sent up an Affidavit in order to compel him to try it in Bristol. Our attorney wishes to be advised whether we ought to plead in justification under our own orders, or only plead not guilty, as this may be as affair of consequence I shall hope that their Lordships will give me their directions what to do.

Margin: let him know that it is a cause in which their Lordships cannot give any advice.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 5 Feb 1780]

260. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 25 March 1780

Bristol, 25th March 1780

Sir,

Lieutenant Nash from Ilfracombe having sent up thirty men he had taken by the assistance of the Skiffs from a Cartel, and as the Two Tenders are full, I applied to Captain Murray of His Majesty's Ship *Cleopatra* to carry them as supernumeraries to Plymouth, and have accordingly sent them on board with proper lists to be delivered to the Commanding Officer, which I hope their Lordships will approve of.

I was in hopes the Tenders would have sailed this Morning, the wind yesterday having come to the Eastward, but soon turned again to the Westward.

The *Rose* and *Fanny* tenders sailed on 1 April, as did HMS *Cleopatra* and the *Three Brothers* armed ship with her convoy. The *Fanny* had 95 recruits, the *Rose* 83 and the *Cleopatra* 30.

[Adm 1/1905 (Wm Hamilton) 25 March, 1 April 1780]

261. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 17 April 1780

Bristol 17 April 1780

Sir,

I beg leave once more to address myself to your Lordships respecting the damages and costs of the Lawsuit wherein I was cast for Impressing Mr. James Caton. I can pretend to no claim, nor am I weak enough to suppose that every officer who does wrong will or ought to be supported. I only plead the goodness of my intention in that affair, it being solely to rid my Country of a profest & active enemy; in that light I hope your Lordships will be so good to view it, and not suffer me to be so great a loser, which I can but ill afford. I am, Sir, &c W Hamilton

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 17 April 1780]

262. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 6 May 1780

Bristol, 6th May 1780

Sir,

I have received a Letter from the Commissioners of the Navy in which they tell me they have orders only for the payment of two Skiffs, and only 5 Men & one petty officer for each skiff. I am afraid my want of explicitness has been the occasion of it, as I find in the copy of my letter to you, after the appointment of Lieut. Nash, the 22nd Sept., I say "I have hired two more skiffs for that service." You will please observe to their Lordships that I requested, by Letter 23rd May, leave to hire a skiff for the remainder of the summer, which they were pleased to allow, having her then in the service. I mentioned two more without advertising to the inaccuracy of the expression, when I ought to be have said three. As to the number of men I suppose I have been guilty of the same mistake. If I mentioned 5, it is 6 in my copy and indeed that is too few, when they are obliged to go in a boat. So that I was thinking to desire their Lordships would permit me to have one men more to each of them, eight in all, now summer is coming on I am in great hopes they will be of much service. Indeed

they already have, and this day two of them accompanied a ship to Kingroad, by which we got eleven men who otherwise would have landed westward.

I hope their Lordships will pardon any occurring them this trouble and give directions to the commissioners of the Navy accordingly.

Margin: 9 May, approve of the whole, with directions accordingly.

[Adm 1/1906 (William Hamilton) 6 May 1780]

263. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 31 May 1780

Bristol, 31st May 1780

Sir,

Please to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have ordered Lieut. Bayne of the *Lioness* & Lieut. Newell of the *Albion* Tender bound to Plymouth with 140 new rais'd Men and have ordered Lieut. Bayne to take what Vessells may be ready to go round land, under his Convoy, which I hope their Lordships will approve of.

I should be glad if their Lordships would please to give orders for a Corporal & Six Marines to be put on board the *Lioness*, when she gets to Plymouth, as they are more to be trusted as Centries & we shall be able to give the Imprest men occasionally a little more Liberty.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 31 May 1780]

264. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 12 June 1780

Bristol, 12th June 1780

Sir,

I have received yours with the advertisements inclos'd. I immediately ordered 2000 of them to be printed, which I have pasted up in the most publick places, distributed amongst the public houses and sent around the neighbourhood of the City, particularly into Kingswood, the great Colliery, that supplied this City. Hitherto all has been quiet here, and I hope & think it will continue so, thro' the precaution & vigilance of the Magistrates. I have for that purpose given them all the assistance in my power.

[Adm 1/1906 (William Hamilton) 12 June 1780]

*It is unclear what was the subject of this handbill, but quite possibly it was a proclamation to deter rioting in the wake of the Gordon riots in London and similar anti-Catholic protests in Bath. The royal proclamation of 7 June 1780 informed citizens that military force would be used to deter any "rebellious and traitorous attempts" against the Crown or the lives and properties of the people. It was initially proclaimed in London, but in the wake of the troubles

in Bath, proclaimed more widely.

Extract from a Letter from Bristol, June 10, 1780.

This morning, near the environs of this city, a hat with a blue cockade[a symbol of the Protestant Association] was hung out at a public house on the road; the alarm soon reached this city, when a body of citizens applied to the chief magistrate to send out and seize the landlord, which was immediately done, and he is now in custody for examination. Several ballad-criers have also been taken up for crying about seditious papers. A proclamation was immediately published and the citizens, I mean the principal ones, armed and prepared to give the first mobbing a warm dose, which you may assure yourself will be done with or without leave of the magistrates. An incendiary letter has been written by an unknown hand to the proprietors of the Romish chapel (for there is but one here) threatening that this night the chapel and 19 houses will be laid to ashes. We thank them for the notice, as it has given sufficient reason for the peaceable citizens arming themselves; and this night the streets will be patrolled by the principal inhabitants; but I trust, as the vigorous disposition of the people of property is gone forth, they will think well before they take a leap among us. The Duke of Beaufort, who is the commander of the military here, is just arrived to head them.

[*London Chronicle*, 13–15 June 1780]

265. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 14 July 1780

Bristol, 14th July 1780

Sir,

Lieutenant Bayne of the *Lioness* Armed Tender informed me that you desired to see the agreement made for taking her up and the use proposed to be made of her as such. Inclos'd I send you a Copy of the agreement, which has been laid before both the Admiralty & Navy Boards. The use I meant to make of her was as a ship of force to overawe the Merchant ships who frequently insult the other Tenders, and also on Occasion to send her down the Channel on hearing of any privateer being on the coast; Or, in case necessity, no King's Ship being here, as a Convoy to the Coasters. On such Occasions I designed to give her an additional number of men from the gangs of shore and from the Tenders, as I did on her going round to Plymouth, tho' attended with some inconvenience as the Tenders could but ill spare the men from their own duty. The Convoy consisted on 16 Vessels, mainly Timber hoys for his Majesty's dockyards; the rest of the coasters, the most of them richly laden. They had lain to, some of them, above a month. All these Lieut. Bayne saw safely into their different ports. At the same time he carried round 80 new rais'd men...I should think it would be of great use, and much to His Majesty's Service, if their Lordships would please allow her Complement to be augmented to fifty men, but this I submit to you.

[Adm 1/1906 (William Hamilton) 14 July 1780]

266. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 21 December 1780

Bristol, 21st December 1780

Sir, You will please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have been called upon for the damage and expenses of the lawsuit commenced against me for impressing James Caton. I hope their Lordships will be so good as to allow it in my expenses, and that I may draw upon the Navy Board for the Amount. I beg leave to assure their Lordships that in this affair I was neither actuated my private pique, nor wantonness of malice, but did it with the sole view of serving my Country, which, as it allways has been the Chief wish of my heart, shall allways be the rule of my Conduct. He appeared to me to come within the description of the Impress act.

I inclose a copy of the Account.

[*The account, whose details ran to 7 pages, amounted to £162-15-5d. With damages of £150, and cash payments of £64, the total bill was £376-15-5d.]

Margin: Let him know this. I have his letter with the enclosed account, and the Admiralty would take it into consideration.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 21 Dec. 1780]

267. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 14 March 1781

Bristol, 14th March 1781

Sir,

Some time ago, I informed their Lordships of the Sailing of the *Rose* Tender for Plymouth with 94 new rais'd men. She got down as far as Lundy, but was obliged to put back, and has met with considerable damage. You will please inform their Lordships that she & the *Albion* sailed this day for Plymouth having onboard 134 new rais'd men, 30 Able, 35 Ordinary, and 60 Lord Mayor's Men.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 14 March 1781]

*Hamilton reported another 74 men on their way on 7 April 1780 aboard the *Fanny* Tender. The tender does not appear to have sailed until 26 April, along with the *Three Brothers*. They now carried 95 men, 12 able, 45 ordinary, 38 Lord Mayor's men.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 7, 26 April 1780]

268. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 12 May 1781

Bristol 12th May 1781

Sir,

As Summer is now coming on, when ships are expected home, I would beg leave to propose to their Lordships the establishing an officer with a gang at a place called Woodspring, about halfway betwixt the mouth of the Bridgwater river and Kingroad where the sailors coming home generally land. I have endeavoured as much as possible to prevent that practice, and have in some degree succeeded, except in those Ships of Force, where the sailors are too many for the controul of the officers, or when they come in fleets. An officer at that place would either deter them from landing or be able when they came to lay hold of them, as besides the gang there would have the assistance from the Skiffs, who come up with the ships but are not always able to prevent them landing. The crews of Three Ships lately fired at them and all got on shore. I immediately printed advertisements offering an additional reward of two guineas for every man belonging to these ships, who should be imprest by an information, and got several of them by that means. If their Lordships shall approve of it, the sooner it is put into execution the better, I am certain, it will much further the Service.

Margin: 14 May: Lieut. Robert Twycross to be employed there under the orders of Captain Hamilton.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 12 May 1781]

269. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 17 July 1781

Bristol 17 July 1781

Sir,

Herewith I transmit a letter from Lieutenant Springthorpe commanding His Majesty's Tender *Fanny* for leave to quit on account of his bad state of health. If your Lordships are pleased to grant his request, I beg leave to recommend Lieut. Charles Oliver North, of his Majesty's Armed Ship, *Three Brothers*, to Succeed him, he having been with me on this Service before he was promoted and commanded the *Lioness* Tender for some months by my order before the appointment of Lieut. Bayne. This I shall esteem a particular favour from their Lordships.

Margin; to be complied with; to be appointed to the command of the Tender

[Adm 1/1906 (William Hamilton) 17 July 1781]

270. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 26 July 1781

Bristol 26 July 1781

Sir, You will please inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that Martin Bodesman was imprest from the *Heart* Privateer and kept by my particular orders for being the Man who fired a Gun at one of the Skiffs employed on the Impress Service, that he is now at the Hospital having fallen sick before the Tender sailed for

Plymouth. I hope in this affair their Lordships will approve of what I did, as I have been very carefull never to distress or molest any foreigners since I have been on this Service.

Margin: Admiralty thought he should eventually be discharged

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm Hamilton) 26 July 1781]

271. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 26 July 1781

Bristol, 26th July 1781

Sir, I have in consequence of their Lordships' directions made inquiry into the case of Hugh Lyons, now belonging to His Majesty's armed sloop *Royal Charlotte*, complaining of his wages having been kept from him by Lieutenant Newell of the *Albion* Tender. Hugh Lyons did belong to the *Albion* Tender and, with the rest of the Ships Company, signed a letter of attorney to Bartholomew Geahagen, Master of the said Tender to receive their Wages at London, the pay books not having come down to Plymouth before they left it, and not to Lieutenant Newell. That before the money was received Hugh Lyons deserted and was run[entered as a deserter] as will be seen by the Tender's Books, that he entered onboard the *Jupiter* Privateer, but before they sailed from Kingroad, he and four more, wrote to me of their being deserters; as such I got them & sent them round on the *Lioness* Tender to Plymouth from which he returned in the *Royal Charlotte* armed sloop, when he wrote the complaint to their Lordships without every applying to Lieutenant Newell, whom, I can assure their Lordships is perfectly innocent in that affair. I have sent for the masters of the Tender and shall inform their Lordships by the next post, of what he has done in this affair, if he has received any money & what he has done with it.

Margin: 16 August, has any further information been received.

[Adm 1/1906 (William Hamilton) 26 July 1781]

272. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 27 August 1781

Bristol, 27th August 1781

Sir,

I have this morning received an express from Lord Shuldham informing me that the Combined Fleet being in Latitude 46 degrees, Longitude 10, steering NE...If an Impress from all protections is ordered, I shall be glad if their Lordships will procure an order for me to be assisted by the Militia. None of the seamen at this port keep in the town, but in Kingswood, where there is no going without an armed force & that pretty strong, to avoid bloodshed. I have ordered all the Men to be taken out of the Merchant Ships in Kingroad, with the promise to restore them if there is no press from Protections.

PS I have ordered Lieut. Bayne in the *Lioness* Tender, a very good Sailor, to get ready for sea in case he should be wanted.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 27 August 1781]

273. Captain William Hamilton to Philip Stephens, 23 December 1781

Bristol, 23rd December 1781

Sir,

I understand from the mayor that he will back the Press Warrants only for three months at a time. As that is an innovation, I think it my duty to make it known to their Lordships that if they do not approve of it, I may receive my instructions at the same time. I beg leave to inform them that as I am upon the best terms with the magistrates, I think it cannot any manner of way be detrimental to His Majesty's Service.

[Adm 1/1906 (Wm. Hamilton) 23 Dec. 1781]

274. Sailor drowned in Kingroad, December 1781

Friday se'ennight a sailor belonging to the *Lioness* Tender was drowned in Kingroad in assisting a child to get on board the above vessel by missing his hold of a rope, unfortunately fell, but the child was luckily saved by another man who caught him before he reached the water. The body of the man was not found until Monday last.

[*Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 5 January 1782.]

275. Seamen escape from the tenders, 1782

Bristol February 13, 1782. On Monday[11 February] the following tragical affair happened in Kingroad. Four sailors, who had entered on board his Majesty's ship *Diomedes*, seized a boat and were making their escape; the officer on duty ordered them to return or he must fire on them; on their refusal he ordered a musket to be discharged, which killed one and wounded another; the remaining two escaped.

[*Gazetteer*, 16 February 1782; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 16–18 February 1782]

Bristol, Aug 22: Sunday the impressed Men on board a Tender in Kingroad rose upon the Gang, and after a considerable Conflict, in which one Man was killed and several wounded, they took the Tender's Boats, and got safe on Shore to the Number of between 40 and 50.

[*St James's Chronicle*, 22–24 Aug 1782; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 24 August 1782; *Parker's General Advertiser*, 24 August 1782]

E: THE NOOTKA SOUND MOBILIZATION, 1790¹⁵

276. Newspaper accounts of impressment in Bristol

Friday[23 July 1790] a very hot press broke out at Bristol, which has continued ever since; they have stripped all the outward-bound vessels in Kingroad of their hands, and the men of war's boats are stationed down the Channel, waiting the arrival of the ships from the West Indies, &c. It is computed they have already procured 700 sailors.

[*English Chronicle*, 27–29 July 1790]

Monday last[31 August 1790] one Thomas Mills, who arrived that day in Kingroad, on board the *Hope* from Jamaica, took the sad resolution of jumping overboard with intent to swim to shore in order to evade the press-gang; but the tide running out very strongly, he was drowned.

[*World*, 3 September 1790]

No person can be ignorant of the very extraordinary tumults, riots, and disorders that have taken place, not only in the Metropolis, but in every part of the kingdom, since press-warrants have been issued out for manning the present fleet under Lord Howe: there have been several persons maimed, innumerable families distressed by having men dragged from their abode; others have been forced to fly from their dearest connections, their wives and children, to avoid the inconveniency and misery of being confined in the loathsome holds of Tenders.

We are apt in this country to pride and exult on the consideration and reflection of

¹⁵ Nootka Sound, west of Vancouver Island was an area of disputed trade and fur trading between Spain and Britain. In the summer of 1789, British vessels were seized by the Spanish and a Spanish fleet reoccupied the Sound. The British demanded freedom of trade, sent Spain an ultimatum, and put the country on a war footing. Hence the mobilization. Trading rights were resolved by the Nootka Convention of October 1790.

our being born in a *Lands of Liberty*, and enjoying the *Freedom* of Englishmen; but where is the boasted privilege of English Freedom when thus forced by violence to relinquish every thing that is most valuable to us, to be exposed to every degree of hardship, and even death itself, and this for only having been *once* engaged on board a ship, however inconsiderable the time of continuance might have been.

It is now well known to the most illiterate and vulgar that this procedure is not legal, but totally repugnant to the *Great Charter* of our laws. The excuse alledged is that of *State necessity*; which may be urged as a plea to supersede every law or privilege an Englishman now possesses.

[*World*, 23 October 1790]

F: THE WAR AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE, 1793–1802

***277. Thomas Hawker to John Ibbertson, Esq., 28 April 1793**

Captain Hawker reported that “I am sorry to say there are few Seamen to be seen here, or on board the Vessels at the Keys, their Lordships may depend upon our doing the best we can, most the seamen here are Americans or Foreigners, the English Seamen all fly to Kings Wood and get on board the Ships half way down the Channel.”

The list for March 1793 included 31 men, of whom 8 were Americans, 2 masters, 2 apprentices, 3 trowmen. They were discharged at the mayor’s request, as was a seafarer from a ‘market boat’.

[Adm 1/1910 (Thomas Hawker) 28 April 1793]

278. Letter of Eleanor Williams, to her husband, Absalom Williams, 21 June 1793¹⁶

*Absalom was the engineer at the Sheerness Estate, St Mary’s parish, Jamaica. The letter talks of the children and their educational provision and then of the wife’s anxieties.

Bristol June 21st 1793.

Dear Husband,

I hope you will take care of your self and not Drink too much of the New Rum, for you know that it is the Death of many a man in that Country. But I hope you will have more Conduct as you are no stranger to the Country and I hope that if you should

¹⁶ Thanks to Madge Dresser for bringing this document to my notice.

come home before the war is over you will[be] carefull how you come on Shore for it is very Crittical times here for they Press from Every vessel that comes to Bristol. I can say no more But wish you have everything turn out to your satisfaction and...I shall be very happy to see you in Bristol once more as soon as possible...I should be glad if you don't come home in the *Hercules*...so I drop my pen for the present but with all good wishes I am capable of for your safety health and welfare and still remain your ever loving and affectionate wife till Death, Eleanor Williams.

[BRO, 41321/1]

279. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, Secretary to the Admiralty, 2 March 1795

Bristol, 2 March 1795,

In compliance with their Lordships' Directions to me, I have made every Enquiry to inform myself of the places which I think additional officers may be station'd to receive and regulate the Men that may be rais'd in and near this Department.

Which are as follows: Newnham and Chepstow in the Severn, and Bridgwater in the Bristol Channel. And should a great Number of men be sent there, it will I think at least require two more Tenders. As to the regulating; should there be Occasion for an additional Officer here, it will be time enough to apply for one when so wanted.

[Adm 1/1912 H 240]

280. The rescue of a deserter, 18 March 1795

Question: whether Persons rescuing a Deserter taken upon immediate pursuit from the Ship should be indicted for a common assault or for a rescue, in the opinion of Mr.[Spencer] Perceval, 2 and 20 April 1795[Lincoln's Inn, London].

*Case: On 17 March, 1795, Captain Dewey, the regulating officer at Exeter, sent a midshipman and one of the gang in pursuit of Thomas Sneath, a deserter who had departed that morning in the Bristol coach. The midshipmen, Henry Wilmot, apprehended Sneath in Bristol, and Sneath confessed to being a deserter from HMS *Anson*. As the men were conducting him to Captain Hawke's rendezvous about 8am on the 18th March, "on his offering a Guinea to the Mob to rescue him, he effected his escape, notwithstanding every effort to prevent him." Wilmot was able to identify William Palmer as one of the ringleaders in the escape. Hawker said that Wilmot and John Townsend followed Sneath to the Bush tavern. When they seized him, William Palmer of the Custom house had the mob rescue him. Spencer Perceval advised the Navy that they should indict Palmer and anyone else who could be identified for common assault (and riot, if they were three or more in number) He did not advise an prosecution for a rescue, because this would bring into question the legal process whereby deserters were arrested. Strictly speaking, a commander should represent the matter to the Lords of

Sir/

14
Dated 15 Feb^y 1814



I beg you will be pleas'd to State to My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have last discover'd my Son Henry Allen, who is Onboard H.M. Ships Enchantress, he has left his Parents for some days - being Entic'd away from his School by some other boys who are in the service also, my son is nearly twelve years of Age, but of a very weakly Constitution, and very subject to be troubled with fits, and can be but of very little use to the service.

I have therefore to beg their Lordships - will be pleas'd to direct him to be discharg'd from the service, for the present, but sh^d. he at a future period be able & willing to be in his Majesty's Naval service I will in that Case, with the greatest pleasure consent to his Wearing the Laurels of his Country in the Naval Employ.

I am Sir, most respectfully,
your most Obedt.

Your Servant -
her
Mary L Allen

Sh^d. be happy to pay every
Expense in Victualling - &c.

Plate 1 Mary Allen pleads to have her son discharged from the navy, 15 February 1814.
[TNA, Adm 1/1737 D72]

N. 134

MERCHANTS' HALL, BRISTOL, 10th Nov. 1812

THIS is to certify that *John Bush*
aged *28* Years, of the Height of *Five Feet Eight*
Inches and a *Brown* Complexion,
is duly registered as a Waterman employed in
assisting Licensed Pilots within the Jurisdiction
of the Port of Bristol.



James Holly
Haven Master.

To be renewed the 10th of November next.

J. M. Gutch, Printer.



His M^c. Ship Enchantress March 8th 1812

Broad pill Bristol

Sir, I have the request, if you will have
the goodness to lay my case before the
Lords Commissioners of his Majesties Navy

I was Impressed on Board his Majesties
S^t. Ship on the 13th ultimo (out of a brig
called the King George of newport By the
Commander of this Ship) (altho I was Mate
of her for upwards of 2 years) my affidavit
that I was Mate of the S^t. Brig is in the
hands of the Commander of this Ship.
I therefore have to request that your Lordships
will take my case into ^{their} consideration
and give an order for my liberation

I am Sir
With the greatest respect
Your humble Servant J. Jones

Plate 3 Thomas Jones, the mate of a Newport brig, asks for a discharge from the navy, 8 March 1812. [TNA, Adm 1/2341 P143]

To all Commanders and Officers of His Majesty's Ships, Press-Masters, and Others whom these may concern.

City of Bristol, } THESE are to CERTIFY those whom it doth or may
To Wit. } concern, That *Thomas Gardner*, — Master
of the Ship or Vessel called The *Frederick*
belonging to *Bristol* burthen

205 Tons, employed in the

West India Trade
and now lying at *Bristol* came before me, one of
his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and voluntarily made
Oath, That *John Barker* the Bearer
hereof (the Description of whose Person is mentioned at the
Bottom of this Page) is a Shipwright belonging to the Place
aforesaid; and that he, the said Shipwright, has the charge of
keeping the said Ship in repair for the benefit of the Owners
and Under-writers during the Voyage from hence to
and back again.



Santa Cruz

Thos Gardner

Sworn before me, at
the Council-House
of the said City, the
twenty eighth Day of
October 18*11*

M^r H Wilson
Mayor

N. B. The above-mentioned *John Barker*
is about *Five* Feet *Three* Inches high *Dark*
Complexion, *dark* Eyes, wearing *short brown hair*
and is about *twenty three* Years of Age, marked
with the small Pox

Plate 4 A "protection" for John Barker, shipwright of the *Frederick*, sailing from Bristol to Santa Cruz and back, 28 October 1811. [TNA, Adm 1/2342 P245]

the Admiralty and they, in turn, should issue a warrant to the Marshal of the Admiralty to apprehend the culprit. This deserter was arrested before a proper warrant was obtained.

When the case came before King's Bench, it was difficult to prove that Palmer actually obstructed the gangers. The evidence suggested that Sneath disengaged himself and the press gang could not pursue him "by reason of the surrounding Crowd." Palmer might be indicted for assault for his menacing attitude and brandishing a club, but unfortunately he did this subsequent to Sneath's escape. In the final analysis Spencer Perceval thought it fortunate that the mayor dismissed the complaint without binding the complainants to prosecute. It was very doubtful that a jury would have convicted Palmer.

"A further case respecting the Rescue of Thomas Sneath, otherwise Wilson, a Deserter from His Majesty's Ship *Anson*, from the Hand of Henry Wilmot and John Townsend at Bristol.

In the King's Bench: Henry Wilmot, Midshipman to the Impress Service at Exeter, and John Townsend, assistant to the same service, jointly make oath as follows: that on Tuesday the 17th day of March last they by order of Capt. Dewey of the said Impress Service at Exeter went to Bristol in quest of one Thomas Sneath otherwise Wilson. That one the next day being Wednesday these deponents went to the Bush Tavern in Bristol aforesaid & enquired for the said Thomas Sneath...& after staying there near two hours a Man came from the said Tavern & corresponding with the Description given these Deponents of the said Thomas Sneath ...the deponent John Townsend asked him if his name was Wilson and he answered it was ; the said deponent John Townsend then asked if he came by the Exeter Coach & acknowledging he did ...John Townsend said to him 'You are my Prisoner' to which the said Thomas Sneath otherwise Wilson answered 'Hard is my fortune'. That the said Thomas Sneath ...thereupon offered these deponents three guineas for his liberty but these deponents knowing their duty rejected his offer & was conveying him to the Impress Rendezvous at Bristol... when the said Thomas Sneath ...ran away...and they in pursuit lost sight of him, but ...Henry Wilmot in order to prevent his escape and to get him stopped cried 'Stop the Thief'...and a Person whose name these Deponents afterwards found to be Palmer asked ...John Townsend ...what the man had done, and John Townsend hastily answering he had committed a Robbery the said Palmer replied that he must be in some of the Houses that were near ...John Townsend went in search for the said Thomas Sneath ...who he found concealed in a Coalhall in the said House and the John Townsend thereon exclaiming 'I have got him'...the deponents taking him by the collar of his Coat were again conveying him to the Rendezvous, but before these deponents had quitted the street...Sneath told the said Palmer & others... that he was discharged from his Majesty's Service & to corroborate which took from his Pocket a piece of paper saying it was his Discharge and that he would give them...a guinea to drink his health, whereupon the said Palmer began to abuse these deponents & called them damned rascals for telling him a Lye...and appeared to be greatly enraged, but the said Henry Wilmot in order to pacify & satisfy the said Palmer, took from his Pocket a Letter which Captain Durham had written to Captain Dewey (for the purpose of apprehending the said Thomas Sneath) and offered it to the said Palmer

& others to read, saying a Reward of ten guineas was offered for the said Thomas Sneath's apprehension, to which they paid no attention, & behaving in a riotous manner, and the aside Thomas Sneath ...finding the said Palmer & others were inclined to abet him. Attempted to strike the said Wilmot & John Townsend and after some struggles, he discharged himself & got off from these deponents, and owing to the Concourse of People who surrounded these deponents, they were totally unable to pursue him and by means thereof the said Thomas Sneath otherwise Wilson escaped."

[Law officer reports, Adm 7/302/290]

281. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 8 April 1795

Bristol 8 April 1795

Sir,

Mr Shute, the Surgeon who examines the Volunteers would be glad to know if their Lordships will allow him to pass good stout Men with slight Venereals. He has examined a great many and would take[them] on that Account, but says that many of them could be cured in a very short time, and most of the seamen have it in some degree or other. He doesn't wish to err, therefore would be glad to have their Lordships' orders concerning it as many of them would go on the Merchant ships if refused by us.

[Adm 1/1912 H241]

282. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 8 April 1795

Bristol 8 April 1795

I wish to communicate to you what my Opinion is concerning the Certificate I am orderd to give to Masters of Merchant[men] of the Ordinary seamen they may take to sea. I look upon it that it may be the means of Protecting many good Seamen on board them, for there are many shruide clever Fellows of Seamen that may pretend Ignorance whatever questions I may ask them, if they wish to go in the Merchants Service. I mean this as hint if you think it proper to communicate it to their Lordships you may, or that you will do as you judge best, by shewing my Certificate (should they be boarded by any of the King's ships, it may be produced as a protection). I shall be obliged with your Answer.

[Adm 1/1912 H242]

283. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 10 April 1795

Bristol, 10 April 1795

Sir,

I have this moment received their Lordships' order for a Deserter from Birmingham, their Order to send an Officer to Wrington to regulate some Men, their Order to send the Men raised here by Land to Plymouth, as also their Directions to me concerning the Certificate I am to give to the Merchant Ships, all which I will put into execution in the best manner I can with the few Officers I have. Lieutenant Cole (who is with Capt Goldestrough) was with me yesterday. He says that Captain Goldestrough will soon have done with him, and as I have only Myself, two lieutenants and four midshipmen, I shall be glad if their Lordships would be pleased to give him orders to put himself under my command to assist in sending the Men raised her to Portsmouth. Lieutenant Brown, who was sent from Exeter to assist me here, I have not seen or had any[contact] since I sent him to Town to regulate some men there.

[Adm 1/1912 H 243]

284. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 16 April 1795

Bristol, 16th April 1795

I have received your Lordships orders to call upon Lieutenant Brown to account for his conduct and will write to him. This Post I fear he will not be able to read my letter or give any Account of himself or Conduct as I received Letter from one of[the] Constables in Frome saying he did not know what to do with him, that he had not eaten any thing since there, but that he had been in a State of Intoxication ever since he has been there. The Midshipman that went with[him] told he left him in[that] State, and could not get[him] to do anything.

[Adm 1/1912 H244]

285. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 19 April 1795

Bristol, April 19th

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that Lieutenant Brown was with me on Friday last, and promised to be with me the next morning to gave an Account of his Conduct, and the Disbursements of the ten pound[£10] he had of me; since which I have not see him. His Wife was with him, in great distress owing to his Conduct. She told me they had nothing to depend on but his half pay and has two children. She hoped their Lordships would have compassion on her."

[Adm 1/1912 H247]

286. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 22 April 1795

Bristol April 22nd 1795

Sir,

Be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that I have received their Orders to clear the Vessels & Ships directed by them to be cleared by a Certificate from me with the proper Restrictions therein mentioned, and shall comply therewith. Their Lordships former Orders to me was to send all the Men raised by the Counties, Parishes & Country round this City in Tenders to Plymouth, the order for sending Men by Land was only those raised for the Port, which the Merchants applied for Leave so to do, and we have been sending them by Land. The others come in so very fast that the three Tenders are quick filled and no other vessels to send them in. I therefore shall be glad with their Lordships leave to hire[a vessel] which I will do on the easiest terms I can.

[Adm 1/1912 H250]

287. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 1 June 1795

Bristol, 1 June 1795

The Commissioners for raising men for the Navy at this Port have delivered me the Instrument in writing, under their hands and seals, containing the names and descriptions of the six hundred and sixty six Volunteers required to be raised for this Port under the Act lately passed for procuring a supply of men from the several Ports of the Kingdom, which I now have the honour of transmitting to you, requesting the favor of your laying it before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, conformably to the requisition contained in the 18th clause of the said Act.¹⁷

[Adm 1/1912 H 261]

288. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 23 June 1795

Bristol, 23 June 1795

Inclosed you will receive an Account of the Volunteers raised by the Counties of Somerset, Gloucester, City and Port of Bristol from the commencement to the 21st instant the day on which the last of them were sent off and corrected up to that time; likewise we have inclosed a List of the Port Voluntiers who have not appeared on their being summoned with their descriptions, to wait my Lords Commissioners further directions thereon.

*The list of delinquent volunteers from Bristol, April–June 1795, included:
3 carpenters, glassmaker, 9 labourers, 4 colliers, a hatter, 2 masons, turner, blacksmith, 4 seamen, 11 seafarers, 2 tailors, smith, servant, shoemaker,

¹⁷ This refers to the Quota Act of 1795 in which ports and inland areas were required to deliver a specified quota of recruits to the navy. See Clive Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars, 1793–1815* (London, 1979), 53; also his *North Riding Naval Recruits: the Quota Acts and the Quota Men 1795–97* (North Yorks CRO Publications, No. 18, 1978); Jonathan Neale, *The Cutlass and the Lash* (London, 1985), 130–32.

currier, 2 watermen, 2 fishermen, tallow-chandler, cordwainer, husbandman. They were aged 17–44 years. 20% were under 20; 49% were in their twenties and 31% were 30 or over. None were 6 feet in height; typically the recruits were 5 feet 5 inches tall, the great majority falling between 5 feet 4 inches and 5 feet 7 inches.

[Adm 1/1912 H266]

***289. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 27 September 1795**

Enclosure:

Account of the Number of Volunteers raised in Bristol and region by Captain Hawker 2 April–21 June 1795.

	Seamen	Seafaring Men	Land Men	Total
Somerset	2	15	31	48
Gloucester	4	20	72	96
Port of Bristol	103	136	336	575
Total	109	171	439	719

Of these 63 had run, 8 were discharged being apprentices and 3 were discharged by Admiralty order. One was sick.

[Adm 1/1912 H 281a]

290. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 26 June 1795

Bristol, 26th June 1795

Sir,

I have received their Lordships' Answer saying they are much concerned at the Number of Volunteers that have deserted, and can safely say it was not owing to any Neglect in me, or my officers, but their own Intentions, as I suppose, to take the Bounties at other Places; many never appear'd after they had received the third of their Bounty from the Collector. Others stayed some Days to collect their Things and settle their Affairs with their Friends. In Short, it was a very difficult matter to get them together to send them away by Land. We have been using every Method in our Power to recover them and shall continue to do so.

[Adm 1/1912 H267]

291. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 8 July 1795

Bristol, 8 July 1795

Enclosure:

From Thomas Lewis, churchwarden of St Thomas, Bristol, to the Admiralty.

I am sorry to be under the necessity of troubling your Lordships to inform you that According to the Order sent me I procur'd two men as Volunteers to serve in his Majesty's Navy being the Number levied on the parish of St Thomas. They were both attested, enrolled, & billeted and one third part of the Bounty paid Agreeable to the Act of Parliament which I thought was all the Duty requir'd of me. But a few Days since I received a Note from the Regulating Captain to inform me that one of the Volunteers had not been at the Rendezvous since his Enrollment and to Order me forthwith to procure another Man as a Substitute which I think I am not obliged to do and beg your lordships' pleasure. I am, Sir..Thomas Lewis

[Adm 1/1912 H269]

292. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 15 July 1795

Bristol, 15 July 1795

Sir,

I receiv'd your Letter with their Lordships' directions to report to them the state of the case represented to them by Mr Lewis, Church Warden of the Parish of St Thomas, Bristol. It is as exactly as he has stated it. I not only wrote to him, but others and sent their Descriptions to the Justices and Officers of the different Parishes in hopes of recovering some of them[deserters], of which I acquainted their Lordships before. The Man's name is William Ball. From the moment he received the third of the bounty of the Collector, he absconded. I have advertised him in the Paper and sent handbills about, but recovered none of them.

[Adm 1/1912 H270]

293. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 9 August 1795

Bristol, 9 August 1795

I shall esteem it a Favor if you will give me your Opinion wither you think they will be any impropriety in my asking for Leave at this time, as I do not think the Service would suffer in the least in my absence a few days. My situation is such that I cannot have any Family with me, they at Portsmouth, and I will thank you to say by return of Post how many days I may write for.

[Adm 1/1912 H 274]

294. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 30 November 1795

Bristol, 30 November, 1795

You will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that Mrs. Sturley, who apply'd for her son's discharge from the *Sceptre* has this Day got two seamen in his Room and they are safe on board the *Union* Tender. Therefore she hoped their Lordships will be pleas'd to order his discharge.

[Adm 1/1912 H282]

295. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 5 December 1795

Bristol, 5 December 1795

I beg leave to acquaint their Lordships that Joseph Hill, now in Newgate, has applied to me to take him into the Navy again, and says he deserted from the *Luton* sloop about the 3rd of last Month, but is now Claim'd by the 2nd Regiment of Dragoons as a Deserter. The Mayor has promised to keep him till I get their Lordships' directions about him.

[Adm 1/1912 H285]

296. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 16 December 1795

Bristol 16 December 1795

I have this day received the Press Warrants for the next year.

According to the Lordships' Orders to take Charge of Joseph Hill, he is sent on board the Tender, but in examining the Books Dennis Delany found a man in his room some time ago of which I am informed the Mayor of Bath's Officers prior to their writing to their Lordships, by sending the Man his Certificate which they would not pay attention to, but I believe he is now discharged.

[Adm 1/1912 H 290]

297. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 27 December 1795

Bristol 27 December 1795

You will be please[d] to communicate to their Lordships that I had no inducement whatever to discharge Dennis Delaney than his having provided a much better man in his place, he being a Landman & has a Family, the other a Single Man and an Ordinary Seaman.

Enclosure, dated Bath, 18 Dec 1795 from P. George, deputy town clerk, of Bath

In consequence of your Letter to Samuel Blatchley, one of the Mayor's officers of this City respecting Daniel Delany's deserting from the navy, he wrote to Captain Hawker, the regulating Captain of Bristol, in answer to one he received from Lieutenant Heightington of the same Date with yours (which I have enclosed) and

recd. the inclosed answer from Captain Hawker which appears a little strange that the Captain shod provide a substitute for Delaney without the apparent knowledge or permission from the Admiralty office. More especially as Delany is a fit and able bodied Man for the Service of the Navy. There appears to the magistrates of Bath something extraordinary in this Business on the part of the Captain.

However after all the Man still remains in Custody and the Magistrates wish to be informed under the above circumstances whether he is to be detained or released from his confinement.

Letter of 23 December 1795, from Hawker, revealed that Delaney was discharged.
[Adm 1/ 1912 H290]

298. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 27 December, 1795

Enclosure: a list of sick recruits who were discharged.

Charles Gordon age 44, Kingroad Harbour, 19 July 1795, an invalid from the *Salvadore*, for harbour duty.

Complaint sure pain in his breast and difficulty in breeden[breathing] the pulse full and quick and dry cough. Blood was taken from his arm...eventually discharged 15 August 1795

James Taugh, 37 able seaman, 17 July Broad Pill near Bristol, an invalid from the *Salvadore*, for harbour duty. Sweld[swelled] testes which he received from hurt by lifting up a gun[presumably cannon] with a hand-spike, this happened three days before he complaint to me, the testes was sweld to goad size and the inflammation great, the pulse full and hard, took blood...discharged from duty on 11 August 1795

William Morgan boy age 16, 11 Dec 1795 Fractured clavicle, which happened through a fall from the Press Room ladder, the ends of the bones was brought together so near as poscivell[possible] by drawing back the shoulder, one compress was emplaint[applied] on the back and one under the arm pit.

[Adm 1/1912 H290]

299. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 29 January 1796

Bristol January 29th 1796

Sir, The inclosed was brought to me this Morning, the Contents I believe to be really the Case. I have therefore inclosed it for their Lordships to know if they will through their Solicitor give him any Assistance. He is not able to pay the Money, and has a Wife and Family.

Bristol January 29, 1796

Sir,

I beg to inform you that on the 9th day of Jan 1795 being in execution of my duty at the Rendezvous, a Man was deliver'd to me by 2 Parish Officers which[who] was enrolled for their parish in the County of Somerset, when Charles Lovell in a

short time after the Mans being deliver'd to me, coming there demanded the Man or ten guineas of me, which he had agreed for with the Officers on procuring the Man, which on refusing (saying he should settle it with them, that it did not concern me) he said he would have him in spite of me, which oblig'd me to turn him out of the Rendezvous room where I was on duty. He assembled a number of People, and swore he would break in the house and have the Man. On my going out, he used abusive language & made an attempt of getting him by superior force. Finding that the case, I thought it necessary to confine him in the press room, which I did for about 2 minutes, for which he enter'd an Action against me and I was cast for £31-14-8d besides my Counsel and Attornies fees. I have not been furnished with the bill before this date, altho the trial was concluded in August 1795. Your being at the trial – must of course know – that it was not founded on a sufficient cause. I hope, good Sir, you will take this business into your serious consideration, having a Wife and large family, and use such methods as you shall think most proper to relieve me as the whole was done for the good of His Majesty's Service and in the Execution of my Duty.

I am, Sir, respectfully, your most obedient servant,
Charles Worth, Lieutenant.

[Adm 1/1915 H 227]

300. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, June 1796

Bristol June 1796

Sir,

I am informed by my Agent that the Impress still prevents him from recovering my half Pay, which I think extreamly hard. I am told it is for Eighty Pounds for Casks, fifty four of them have been deliver'd into Store at Mr. Spane here for which they will give me Receipt, and I am almost sure that the rest were delivered into Store at different Ports, as they were ordered to be put on board the other Tender for that Purpose, since which the Officers of the Tenders have been dispersd to different Ports, and it is not in my Power to procure the Receipt. It is a great sum to pay from my Family; and only for having put a Master into the *Venus* Tender in the year 1793 and which at that Time I did for the good of the service, as the Owner would not send or find one[substitute], which will be seen by my former letters to Admiralty. Had I known this soon after the *Venus* was put out of service, I might (by getting the Receipts) have set everything in a Clear Light.

I therefore beg you will be pleased to present this my Request to the Right Honrble The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I hope they will take it into their kind Consideration, and order the Impress to be taken off, which will be ever gratefully remembered by their Lordships' Dutiful and most obedient humble servant, Thomas Hawker.

[Adm 1/1915 H 237]

301. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 6 August 1796

Salopian Coffee House, [likely Charing Cross, London] August 6 1796

Sir,

The Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain having been pleas'd by their order last November to charge an Impress against my full and half pay on account of Deficiencies which appear'd over on the Ballances of the several Stores put on board the *Venus* Tender, Smith and Downey, Masters, I wish their Leave have come from Bristol for the Purpose of Adjusting the same, and after considerable trouble and Expence, have had the satisfaction of bringing the Business to a close, so far as relates to the ascertainment of the Ballances due to Government.

At the Victualling Office there appears due the sum of	£62-12-9 1/2d
At the Slop Office	70-12-3d
At the Ordnance Office	1-19-2d
Amounting in the Whole to	135-4-2 1/2d

I hope their Lordships will allow me to state the Reason why I humbly think it will appear that no part of these Ballances should be charg'd against me, more particularly as their Lordships gave the Order on the Ground of the Appointment of Downey as Master of the Tender contrary to the Inclination and opposite to the Appointment of another from the Owner.

The Fact was when Smith the first Master behaved improperly, I wrote to the Owner (his Father) desiring him to send up a[nother] Master. The Owner was then at Dyart[Dysart] in Scotland, and answerd that sending a Master from[there] travelling would be attended with enormous Expence and requested me to appoint a Mate. The Mate having refused, I put in Downey, nearly unknown to me, but recommended to me as an honest Man, and this I did from no other Motive but the Necessity that appeared of committing the Charge of the Stores to some person for the benefit of the Service. The Appointment belong'd to the Owner, but he having acted to his own[way?] by not appointing a successor to Smith surely can have no just claim on me for the Reparation of an Injury occasion'd by his want of attention, without referring however to the Conduct of Mr Smith in this Business. I am surely justified in stating that no improper Conduct could have been committed, nor would the Crown have sufferd any Injury, had Lieutenant Mayne the commanding officer of the Tender obeyd my Orders, which were, when the Ship was discharg'd, to deliver all the Stow to the[a] Different Tender, then at Bristol on that Station, that they might be taken round to Plymouth and returned into Store there.

As to myself, I was on Shore wholly unconnected with the interior proceedings of the Tenders, and Ignorant both of the Quality and Nature of the Stores on board. It is not for me to say to whom these deficiencies should be charg'd. Their Lordships will judge w[h]ether Lieutenant Mayne's half Pay or the Tender Freight should be liable, but I intreat you to lay before their Lordships these Facts, and earnestly intreat that they will take the Matter into their Consideration and order the Impress against me on this Account to be clear'd.

302. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 28 August 1796

Bristol, 28 August 1796

Sir, I have receiv'd yours, with their Lordships' directions about Mr. Steeter and have seen the Surgeon who says he has been a long time in the Hospital, and does not think that he will be able to do any Duty for a Long while. What he has represented respecting his Mother and Father is true, inclosd I return his Letter.

Enclosed:

Bristol, August 26 1796

Sir,

I am request[ing] the favour that you will be Pleas'd to lay before their Lordships my State. I have belongd to his Majesty's Hired Tender the *Frederick* for the 13th Day of Feb. 1793 until the 25th July 1796 and served as Midshipman, since which I have lost My Mother in Law, my Father now is in an Ill State of Health which necessitates me to request their Lordships' Order of being Discharged so as to enable me to settle the Family Affairs. I have apply'd to Capt. Hawker who refers me to their Lordships. My Ill State of Health have obliged me, from trouble and A Rhumatick Complaint, to go to Sick Quarters, at which Place I remain. Capt. Hawker and the Surgeon can Assertain the facts I have above stated and nothing else would have induced me from quit[t]ing His Majesty's Service but as above stated. I have the Honor, &c Steeter

[Adm 1/1915 H245]

303. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 29 August 1796

Bristol August 29th 1796

Sir,

I received yours, with their Lordships' directions to cause a good look out for two Men by the names of John Broughall in the ship *Charlotte* and Joseph Hudson, ship *Simon Taylor*, [both] belonging to his Majestie's Ship *Africa* and immediately sent Order to the Lieutenants in the Tenders at Kingroad to keep a sharp look out, and examine the Vessels for that Purpose.

[Adm 1/1915 H 247]

304. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 2 September 1796

Bristol September 2nd 1796

Sir,

The inclos'd is just brought me, which I send, and beg you to lay it before their Lordships'. Mathew Pike was press'd at this Port the 15 November 1793 and sent on board the *Union* Tender 16 Nov., but her books for that time being sent to the Navy

Office, I cannot say positively if he did find another Man in his Room. If he did, he had a certificate. The Books must prove it.

[Adm 1/1915 H250]

305. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 6 September 1796

Bristol 6 September 1796

Sir,

I received your Letter, with their Lordships directions to discharge Isaac Smith, the American, and beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships' that I sent him round to Plymouth by the *Lord Mulgrave* Armed Ship, which was the first opportunity, and according to their Orders, dated 15th Instant. She saild last Tuesday from Kingroad.

[Adm 1/1915 H 257]

306. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 8 September 1796

Bristol, September 8th 1796

Sir,

Be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships that I have just receivd the inclosed from the Master of the *Union* Tender in Kingroad now taking in men. Where Lieutenant Dobbins is, he knows not. I have been to the surgeon to enquire if he knew where he was, he told me no; if he knew where he was he should have written to him, I don't find that any One can tell where he is. The Surgeon has written to his Agent but has had no answer.

Enclosure: Union Tender September 7, 1796

Sir,

Having received your order for me not to leave the Tender without the Lieutenant is on board, I beg leave to inform you that Lieut. Dobbin has been at Sick Quarters these nine weeks. Therefore it is impossible for me to do the duty of the ship and keep her manned without going on shore. I am, Sir, your very humble servant, William Wallace Pearson, Master.

[Adm 1/1915 H 252]

307. The impressment of Americans, September 1796

Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean

Bristol, September 9th 1796

Sir,

I received yours with the inclosed, and sent the Lieutenant to enquire the Circumstances as mention'd in it by Mr Vanderhorst, the American Consul, and find

them to be true. I shall therefore discharge Richard Davis and give him a Certificate according to their Lordships' Orders. The Lieutenant also enquired about Isaac Smith, and find he has been sworn before the American Consul of whom he has got a Certificate. I shall wait their Lordships' orders for his Discharge.

[Adm 1/1915 H 253]

308. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 14 September 1796

Bristol September 14th 1796

Sir,

Inclosed I send you (for their Lordships' Information) a Copy of Isaac Smith's Attestation, also Captain Home's letter in Answer to mine telling him that he was secured. He is now on board the *Union* Tender and I have the Original Attestation in my Possession from the American Consul Mr Vanderhorst.

Enclosure:

I have received Your Letter regarding Joseph Hogdson who was sent on board the Service Tender. His description does not appear in my Books, but it appears that he had taken Two Names while on board the *Africa*, no doubt with an intention to sail[with] some American Pass or protection. He was sent here from HM Ship *Ceres* from Leogane, being in one of those American Ships that were taken then, & when he came to the *Africa* he could shew no proper Protection. But when his name came to be stated in the Supernumeraries' List he then took another name although it was sometime after he came on board. His first name was Hutchinson which corrected himself to Hogdson & it is impossible if his Name was really Smith but it must have been known unless he chose to conceal it, and I should imagine his taking Two Names was a Sufficient reason for presuming he was in Fact an American. I have a letter from the Admiralty which says that the Master of the *Ceres*, Taylor, protested he was not on board, but had been returned to the *Africa*.

I am, Sir, your most obedient Servant, Rodney Home
Sheerness, 20th Sept. 1796

[Adm 1/1915 H 255]

309. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 21 September 1796

Bristol September 21st 1796

Sir, I beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships that I find no one knew of Lieutenant Dobbin's going to Town but the Surgeon's Assistant.

I therefore suppose he must have had some very pressing Reasons for going, and meant to have return'd when the Business he went on finish'd. I therefore hope their Lordships will not take it up too seriously as I understand from Mr Pye, the Surgeon's Assistant, that he was very ill and he thought it absolutely necessary.

[Adm 1/1915 H 256]

310. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 9 October 1796

Bristol October 9th 1796

Sir, Mr Vanderhorst, the American Consul, called on me yesterday and desired I would remind you to send him Isaac Smith's Certificate of his being such; and which was attested before him, as they are his vouchers.

[Adm 1/1915 H 258]

311. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 21 October 1796

Bristol, October 21st 1796

Sir, I am very sorry that I am oblig'd to request their Lordships would be pleas'd to appoint another Officer to the Rendezvous in the place of Lieutenant Hughington, who died suddenly yesterday afternoon. He was a very worthy good officer.

[Adm 1/1915 H259]

312. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 4 November 1796

Bristol, November 4th 1796

Sir, Inclosd I send the Account of Provisions, Slops &c, which the two Apprentices have had on board the *Union* Tender according to their Lordships' Orders,

Margin. 5 Nov. Direct Capt Hawker to discharge the Apprentices upon repayment of the amount that has been advanced to them in necessaries. Acquaint Mr Raffles accordingly, stating the respective sums.

Enclosure:

Bristol October 30th 1796

Sir, Inclos'd I return the Letter with the Indentures of the two Apprentices on their coming to enter with me. I told them I believ'd they were such, but they strongly denied it, and this Day I have seen the Lieutenant of the Tender; he tells me they also denied being Apprentices to him, and notwithstanding the Letter they wrote, they were very well contented, but at the time they did write it, they were afraid of going on board a Man of War and the only reason they had was that Work was slack, and they wanted to see the World.

Nov 3 1796: *Union*[Tender], Kingroad

Robert Hicks and Richard Munday 36 days subsistence each.

For each apprentice: 1 bed 13s, 2 shirts 4/7d, 1 pair Trousers, 3/5d, 1 pair stockings 2/3d.

Sir, In compliance to your order I have sent the account of the two Boys and have the honor to be &c. Samuel Bateman

[Adm 1/1915 H264]

313. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 18 November 1796

Bristol November 18 1796

Sir, I have receivd their Lordships Order to send to the Devizes for Joseph Geoffreys a Deserter from the *Union* Tender, and beg Leave to inform them that I receivd an Order for that purpose dated the 21st of October. I then sent for him, and put him on board the *Union* Tender, and he was secured in Irons, and saild from hence the tenth Instant for Plymouth.

[Adm 1/1915 H 268]

314. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 25 November 1796

Bristol November 25th 1796

Sir,

The inclosd was produced last Night by John Clarke as a Protection which I sent the Lieutenant with to the American Consul, who told him it was none[null?]. I have therefore sent it to have their Lordships' directions concerning it, as I conceivd that no Protection to be valid unless sign'd by an American Consul in England, or by a British Consul in America.

[Adm 1/1915 H273]

315. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 28 November 1796

Bristol 28th November 1796

Sir,

I received your Letter with their Lordships' Directions to enrol Men for the Gun Vessels, Fire Vessels, or Boats, and shall obey them, but with respect to exercising them at the Gun, I have neither Gun or Ammunition, or any means of so doing, as my Officers and Men are constantly employd, the Former at the Rendezvous, the latter in the Boats at Tide Time, to take down the Men to Kingroad. I will send a regular Weekly Account of such as I may enrol

[Adm 1/1915 H274]

316. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 26 December 1796

Bristol, December 26th 1796

Sir,

I receiv'd yours with their Lordships' order concerning William Davis, the American. He had nothing to prove his being such. He is gone round to Plymouth in the *Polly* Tender. I also received their Lordships Order about Mathias Morill. He is here and I shall obey their Order and send him on board the *Resolution* Cutter. The Weekly Account shall be sent as regular as as complete our time will admit.

[Adm 1/1915 H277]

317. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 14 February 1797

Bristol, Febry 14th 1797

Sir,

Be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships that I have this Day enterd and sent away all my Books and Accounts of Enrolling the Men for the Counties & Parishes, and having my Eldest Brother in a dangerous state of Health at the age of Eighty, and being sole Executor to his Will, I hope their Lordships will indulge with fourteen Days leave.

Margin: grant him the leave he has desired taking care to be no longer absent from his duty than he may conceive to be absolutely necessary.

[Adm 1/1916 H 169]

318. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 10 April 1797

Bristol, April 10th 1797

Sir, I beg you will be pleas'd to acquaint their Lordships that I received their Letter of the 7th saying they disapproved of my receiving such men (as represented by Sir John Ord) into the service, and have the happiness to inform them that I have examin'd the Books and only find one regulated at the Rendezvous by the Name of Thomas Seapongs; discharged for the Rheumatism, he was so examined by the Surgeon; and perhaps enrolled himself mainly to get the Bounty; had no Complaint there, whatever; but it is easy for any Man to say he has the Rheumatism to answer his purpose. Four Tenders went from this place with Quota men; the *Frederick* was driven to Dublin, the *Polly* to Cork, and one was very near being lost at Scilly[Isles]: and were a long time before they got to Plymouth, that they may have got many disorders in that time; I have the honor to be, Sir your most obedient Servt, Thomas Hawker.

PS Many that went from hence in the Tenders were regulated by different officers.

[Adm 1/1916 H170]

319. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 7 May 1797

Portsmouth, May 7th 1797

Sir, You will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that yesterday I receiv'd a Letter from Lieutenant Worth from the Rendezvous at Bristol of the sudden Death of Lieutenant Styles; and at the same times informs me that Lieutenant Mitchell who (by Order of the Admiralty) assisted me in the Quota Business, had applied for it, and (if their Lordships please) I should be glad he was appointed in the Room of Lieutenant Styles,

Margin: 8 May, acquaint him that Lieutenant Mitchell is appointed.

[Adm 1/1916 H174]

320. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 28 May 1797

Bristol, May 28 1797

Sir,

Pursuant to their Lordships directions I have sent to Newgate and find the Petitioners Thomas Horrill, Henry Fletcher, William Man under sentence of transportation for 7 years, Thomas Brown for 14 years. They have been examined by the Surgeon and approved[for entry into the navy].

Margin: 1 June, acquaint him that no more men are to be received from the Gaols on any account.

[Adm 1/1916 H177]

321. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 21 June 1797

Bristol, June 21st 1797

Sir, I received yours with Mr Streeter's Petition and have enquired into his Affairs, and find his Father died not long since Insolvent. 'Tis his Mother in Law that is supported by him, and his two Daughters partly from his Business and partly from them; but while he belongs to the Tender he is obliged to hire a Man as a Servant to help one of the Daughters in his Line, which he would not want cou'd he attend it himself. I believe all this is true,

[Adm 1/1916 H 180]

322. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 22 August 1797

Bristol, August 22nd 1797

Sir,

The Mother of William Sage has been with me. She says she has six children at home besides the one on board the *Union* Tender, who is a very great support to the Family but will give on further Proof of it in a few Days, and try to get a Man in his stead. When that happens I will acquaint you with it unless their Lordships please to order his discharge on her Word for a Substitute.

[Adm 1/1916 H 187]

323. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 25 August 1797

Bristol, August 25th 1797

Sir, According to their Lordships' Orders by your Letter I have sent up the Entry, Age and Qualification of William Sage; he enter'd the 7th, a Landman aged 20 years, born at Pensford. Was sent on board the *Union* the 8th. This all appears by the Book at the Rendezvous.

Enclosure:

These are to certify that Mary Gullock who was left a Widow by the Death of her Husband Charles Gullock, who was killed by an accident at the Radstoke[Radstock] Colliery in the County of Somerset in the year 1794, & whose son William Sage has entered on board his Majesty's Ship *Union* Tender.[She] is by the loss of the said Son deprived of the chief means of subsisting her infant family being seven children the youngest born since the Death of the said Charles Gullock. She therefore humbly hopes & trusts the commissioners of his Majesty's Navy & the Commander of the said Ship will be pleased to grant her petition in suffering her said son William Sage to return to his usual work at the Coal Pitt to enable her to bring up the said infant family – to the truth of the foregoing statement we the undersigned the Rector and Church Warden of Radstock have affixed four names. Benjamin Sims, churchwarden

Somerset (to wit) The above named Mary Gullock appeared this 24th August 1797 before me, one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace for this County & on her oath verified the above contents. Thomas S Jolliffe.

[Adm 1/1916 H188]

324. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 11 September 1797

Bristol, September 11th 1797

Sir, I received your Letter with the inclosed Petition. The Lad's Friends live at Newport and the Petition was drawn up in his Place by one who knows nothing of the Family; at the request of a Man that I know nothing of. I therefore hope in future their Lordships will pay no attention to them, unless they are attested by the Parish Officers, or some respectable Persons. The Lad, Thomas Morgan, is a fine stout fellow, and gave in his Age 20 at the Rendezvous, nor do I know he wants to get off,

I have the honor to be...Thomas Hawker

[Adm 1/1916 H 190]

325. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 22 November 1797

Bristol November 22nd 1797

Sir, I am extremely sorry to trouble their Lordships, but in Justice to myself and officers, I cannot avoid it, as this is the second time a complaint had been lodged at the Admiralty against me, and my Officers, for sending round improper Men. The first was five Men; only one went round in the Tender, the rest not having entered here; and now only three out of Sixty here, tho' five mentioned in the complaint against us; As their Lordships will see by the List I return to you, with the Remarks against the names. Captain Boyer must have given very incorrect Lists to Sir Richard King. I hope from what I have here explaind that every imputation of Blame will be done away with me and my Officers, as I am convinc'd (as I said in my last) that they are as Cautious as possible.

Ps I hope their Lordships will be so good as to give me an Answr to this.

Enclosure[listing the five men]

John Wyatt age 35 Landman, Unserviceable being an idiot.

William Densley, able seamen, unserviceable, aged 57. Wounded aboard the *Vengeance* and received a Hurt on board the *San Damasco*[neither of them entered at Bristol]

William Allen, ordinary seaman, Unserviceable having a wounded testicle. Was entered at the Rendezvous without being examined by one Stone. This man, aged 20, did his Duty the whole time he was on board the Tender, reefed and steered. Both Lieutenant Innes and Mr. Muskett the master declared to me they never wishd to have a better Man

Thomas Jones, Ordinary seaman, unserviceable, being subject to fits. Age 30, 3 years at sea. Had not the least appearance of of Fitts while on board the Tender between 17 & 20 days.

John O'Brien Ordinary,

Unserviceable having a lame foot, was invalided from the *Cambridge*, the 30th June 1797. 28 years of age, 6 years at sea. This Man also did his Duty while on board the Tender and willingly and does not walk lame from which circumstance suppose the surgeon did not suspect his having lost toes.

Margin: 23 Nov., Send copy to Sir Richard King for his information. Let him know I have so done & that I shall let him know their Lordships opinion on his conduct as soon as I obtain his explanation.

[Adm 1/1916 H 196]

326. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 27 November 1797

Bristol, November 27th 1797

Sir,

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that I fear I have much incurr'd their Displeasure in my last Letter in saying that John Wyatt and William Densley did not enter at this Rendezvous, by which I positively contradicted myself, but without any Intention to deceive their Lordships, as they may suppose, as it must absolutely fall on myself having prior to it sent the Surgeon's Approval of them. But I hope their Lordships will be so good as to pardon it when I relate to them the state of my Mind at that time. I have had a very bad cold in my Head for these two Months, and at the time I wrote the Letter I had not been out for eight days, and being much Distressed in Mind expecting to hear of the Death of a son coming from Lisbon every[any?] day (he is since arriv'd, I hope just in time to save him tho extremely ill) this and the Complaint against me absolutely hurt me so much that I scarce knew what I wrote. Inclosed I have sent a List of Invalids brought back to Bristol in which their Lordships will see neither of the above Names. The master says they were delivered on board the receiving ship. I hope their Lordships will be so indulgent as to forgive me this great Error and I will in future use my utmost Endeavours to prevent any improper men being sent round. The Lieutenant wou'd have signed the List, but was on board in Kingroad. I was fearful of losing the Post.

I have been in the service since the year[17]59 and my Character never call'd in question.

Margin: 28 Nov own her (acknowledge the letter) and acquaint him that their Lordships expect he will be more careful in future.

[Adm 1/1916 H 197]

327. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 4 March 1798

Bristol March 4th 1798

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that I received their Order to send to the Devizes for Thomas Watson, James Williams, and James Coleman; and obey'd it by sending for them; and am sorry to say that I am sure they have been Night Thieves, and a bad set; for last night by some means they separated the Bars of the Room and had near all made their Escape; but the Gang and Midshipmen secured two of them, after being out. James Coleman got clear off; he was unfit for the Land or Sea Service having a fractured scull & broken Arm; and had two discharge tickets, one from the Army, the other from the Navy. James Williams, tho' fit for service, is a poor looking little Fellow. If your Lordships will allow me to send the Surgeon's Mate (in future) on these Occasions, it may save much trouble and Expençe as I believe these men have committed many Irregularities & have been taken up; and perhaps they could not convict them. Therefore in order to get rid of them apply'd first to me, as your Lordships will see by the Inclos'd Letter, and Surgeon's Certificate. I have the two on board the Tender as being more secure till I

know their Lordships' pleasure.

I have the honor to be &c

Ps I have not a Doubt but they have been old Offenders.

Margin: 5 March, Acquaint him that as these two men are on board the Tender they are to be sent around to Plymouth, but in future, when he has suspicion of men offered by the magistrates being persons of notoriously bad character, he is to represent the same, & not to take charge of them until he shall receive further orders.

[Adm 1/1918 H 225]

328. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 15 March 1798

Bristol March 15th 1798

Sir, I have this moment received the inclos'd & sent for their Lordships Information. It is the Man that broke out of the Press Room here. I have the honor to be &c.

Enclosure

Sir, I am directed by James Buller, Esquire, one his Majesties Justices for the County of Devon, to request the favour of being informed whether it is true that a stout fellow who saith his Name is James Coleman, an American, entered with you & escaped from the Rendezvous last Saturday Week, at the same time every information respecting him. He stands com[mitted] to my Custody with a wife and two child as vagrants, having behaved in the most daring, abusive & outrageous manner. I am, Sir, &c

Margin: 16 March, Direct Regulating Officer at Dartmouth to send for the Deserter. Own it (file the letter) and acquaint Captain Hawker accordingly.

[Adm 1/1918 H 228]

329. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 19 March 1798

Bristol March 19th 1798

Sir,

Inclos'd I send you a Note from the Mayor of this City to me relative to Samuel Leonard, a Seaman pressed on shore by Lieutenant Mitchel[l], whom he requested I would discharge. I inform'd him my Admiralty Orders were not to discharge any Man without their Lordships' Knowledge. I now therefore wait their Lordships' Pleasure. I have the honor to be, &c

Enclosure:

Council House, Bristol 17th March 1798

The Mayor returns his thanks to Capt. Hawker for his polite attention to his application for the discharge of Samuel Leonard lately impressed, but as his Orders

from the Admiralty are positive not to comply therewith without their instructions he can by no means urge it. At the same time the Mayor begs to apprise Capt. Hawker if this is to be considered as a standing order, he cannot consistently with the Trust reposed in him (however great his Inclination is and ever has been to promote the Interest of Government) think of renewing in future any impress warrants, as such Order totally deprives him from exercising even a discretional power within his own Jurisdiction which by his Oath of Mayor he is bound to support and maintain.

Margin: 20 March: direct him to transmit to me a particular state of the case, and to represent to the Mayor that in the event of any Man being improperly impressed he should state the circumstances to me for their Lordships' consideration.

[Adm 1/1918 H229]

330. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 22 March 1798

Bristol, March 22nd 1798.

Sir, I receiv'd their Lordships' Order to state to them the Case of Samuel Leonard being impressed. He belonged to the Perseverance fitting out in the River; and was taken onshore in the same manner that others have been pressed. The Morning after he was taken, the Master came to request his discharge; said he should not know what to do without him as he was so well acquainted with Barbadoes. The other men said he had been but one Voyage to sea, but had been us'd to the Water all his Life. I know of no impropriety in his being press'd; it was at half past seven in the Evening on shore. I have the honor to be &c

Ps I communicated the latter part of the letter to the Mayor, Your most obedient servt., Thomas Hawker.

Margin: Let me see the application. If not returned by Captain Hawker write to him for it.

[Adm 1/1918 H230]

331. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 7 May 1798

Bristol May 7th 1798

Sir, I have sent a List of Men pressed by Lieutenant Granger & Gang on Friday & Saturday. I have the honor to be, & Thomas Hawker

Ps The seamen are very scarce in Bristol.

Enclosure A List of 23 Men Prest by the Navy Rendezvous Gangs in Bristol, Under the Direction of Captain Thomas Hawker, On the 4th and 5th May 1798

[*the list gives the name of recruit, age, sea experience, place of origin, calling, whether discharged or send on tender, reason for discharge]

On 4 May 1798:

Benjamin Davis, 19 yrs, none at sea, Boy, Bristol, shoemaker, discharged, apprentice

John Cooke, 19 yrs none at sea, boy, Bristol, shoemaker, discharged, apprentice

John Hutcheson, 19 yrs, 2 yrs at sea, Dublin, seafaring, discharged, apprentice

John Dillon, 18 yrs, 1 yr at sea, boy, Dublin, seafaring, discharged, apprentice

Charles Carey, 20 yrs, 1 at sea, Lord Mayor's man, Ireland, labourer, discharged, scurvy

Thomas Davis, 20 yrs 2 years at sea, ord. seaman, Wales, seafaring, discharged, wounded in leg

James Saunders, 40 yrs, 2 at sea, ord. seaman, Cornwall, seafaring, discharged, wounded in leg

William Grey, 16 yrs, 1 at sea, boy, America, seafaring, discharged, an American

Israel Sparks, 35 yrs, 11 at sea, able seaman, America, seafaring, discharged, an American

Jonathan Youngs, 27 years, 5 at sea, ord seaman, American, seafaring, discharged an American

Charles Jones, 37, 16 years at sea, able seaman, Minehead, seafaring, *Polly* Tender, serviceable.

William Grey, 27 yrs, 15 at sea, able seaman, Yarmouth, seafaring, *Polly* Tender, serviceable

George White, 20 yrs., 3 at sea, ord seaman, Milford Haven, seafaring, *Polly* Tender, serviceable

On 5 May 1798:

James Mills, 20 yrs., 3 at sea, ordinary, Cornwall, seafaring, *Polly* Tender, serviceable.

John Davis, 35 yrs., 13 at sea, able seaman, Wales, seafaring, discharged, master of vessel

William Williams, 26 yrs., 5 at sea, ord. seaman, Wales, seafaring, discharged, ruptured

David Pike, 25 years, 7 at sea, able seaman, Wales, seafaring, discharged, corporate protection from the Mayor of Bristol

Thomas Morgan, 20 yrs., 7 at sea, Lord Mayor's man, Bristol, labourer, discharged, ruptured

Thomas Clark, 23 years, 13 at sea, able seaman, St Ives, seafaring, discharged, master of vessel

Owens Barten, 30 yrs., 12 at sea, able seaman, Altenburgh, seafaring, discharged, foreigner

David Thomas, 40 years, 12 at sea, Lord Mayor's man, Wales, labourer, discharged, ruptured

James Davis, 36 yrs., 5 at sea, ordinary, Wales, seafaring, discharged, unserviceable with a discharge

William Wayman, 26 yrs., 12 at sea, able seaman, America, seafaring, discharged, an American.

[Adm 1/1918 H 233a]

332. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 13 May 1798

Bristol May 13th 1798

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships I have comply'd with their Order to send for the Deserter from Worcester, and he is now on board the Tender.

Inclos'd I have sent a copy of a Letter the Mayor brought me, and wish to know if I may take the French Man therein mention'd into the Service; I am told he is a Loyalist and has fought against his Country. I shall wait their Lordships' Pleasure,

I have the honor to be, Sir &c

Thomas Hawker

Margin: 14 May Acquaint him that no Frenchmen of any description in allowed to enter for H.M. Navy.

[Adm 1/1918 H 236]

333. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 7 July 1798

Bristol, July 7th, 1798

Sir, I have comply'd with their Lordships Orders respecting the Apprentices that were impress'd, Nicholas Pocock and John King, I find to be as represented and have discharg'd according to their Lordships' Order.

The other three in the Margin are as mentioned,[with sea experience] against their Names.[William Jones, 19, one year at sea; Robt. Osborne, 18, two years at sea; Samuel Capp, 15, two years at sea]. With this you will access the Indentures.

Margin: 9 July acquaint the persons applying that the Exigencies of the public service do not admit of their request being complied with.

[Adm 1/1918 H242]

334. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 18 July 1798

Bristol July 18th 1798

Sir, I receiv'd their Lordships Order to take an able seaman in the room of the following Apprentices, William Jones, Robert Osborn, William Taylor, and John Jenkins, and when offrd shall receive them, and discharge the others according to their Lordships' orders. I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that William Taylor has been discharg'd without anyone in Lieu, and has had a certificate according to their Order, dated the 14th instant.

Margin: I thought I had guarded in the Minutes against this mistake.

[Adm 1/1918 H 245]

335. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 12 August 1798

Bristol August 12 1798

Sir, I received the Lordships' orders to enquire into the case of William Williams and Simn Burn. The first is 26 years of age, an able seaman, a fine young man. The Latter was born in Ireland. I have seen the American Consul, Mr Vanderhoot, who says the protection of no use to a British subject in this Country.

I have not as yet seen the Indentures of the Apprentice to Stephen Wellington. When they produce them I shall obey their Lordships' order to discharge him if I find the case as represented to them,

Enclosure:

A List of 25 Men Prest by the Navy Rendezvous Gangs at Bristol, Under the Direction of Captain Thomas Hawker, on the 4th and 5th May 1798. No 225

4th May

Name	Age	Years at Sea	Quality	Born Calling	How disposed of On what account
Benjamin Davis	19	0	boy	Bristol shoemaker	discharged apprentice
John Cooks	19	0	boy	Bristol shoemaker	discharged apprentice
John Hutcheson	19	2	boy	Dublin seafaring	discharged apprentice
John Dillon	18	1	boy	Dublin seafaring	discharged apprentice
Charles Carey	20	1	landman	Ireland labourer	discharged scurvy
Thomas Davis	20	2	ord	Wales seafaring	discharged wounded & contracted leg
James Saunders	40	2	ord	Cornwall seafaring	discharged wounded leg
William Grey	16	1	boy	America seafaring	discharged American
Israel Sparks	35	11	able	America seafaring	discharged American
Jonathan Youngs	27	5	ord	America seafaring	discharged American
Charles Jones	37	16	able	Minehead seafaring	Polly Tender serviceable
William Grey	27	15	able	Yarmouth seafaring	Polly Tender serviceable
George White	20	3	ord	Milford seafaring	Polly Tender serviceable

5th May

James Mills	20	5	ord	Cornwall seafaring	Polly Tender serviceable
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John Davis	35	13	able	Wales seafaring	discharged master of vessel
William Williams	26	5	able	Wales seafaring	discharged ruptured
David Pike	25	7	able	Wales seafaring	discharged a protection from the mayor of Bristol
Thomas Morgan	20	7	landman ¹⁸	Bristol labourer	discharged ruptured
Thomas Clark	23	13	able	St Ives seafaring	discharged master of vessel
Owens Barten	30	12	able	Altenburg seafaring	discharged foreigner
David Thomas	40	12	landsman	Wales labourer	discharged ruptured
James Davis	36	5	ord	Wales seafaring	discharged unserviceable
William Wayman	26	12	able	America seafaring	discharged American

Enclosure:

State of Maryland, Baltimore County to wit

On this day the twelfth of January in the year One Thousand seven hundred and ninety five, before me, George P Keeports, Notary Publick, by lawful authority commissioned and sworn, dwelling in Baltimore Town in the County and State aforesaid, personally appeared Simon Burns, a Mariner who made oath before me on the Holy Evangels of Almighty God, that he is about Thirty three Years of age and that he was in the Service of some Person or Persons residing in the United States of America previous to and at the same time their Independence was declared by Great Britain and that he has ever since continued a Citizen of the said United States of America. In Testimony whereof the said deponent hath hereunto subscribed his mark instead of his Name and I the said Notary have also set my Hand and affixed my seal Notarial this day and year first above written. Simon Burns x his Mark. 5 foot high

George P Keeports, Notary Public of Baltimore County

Enclosure:

To Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

Gentleman, Having a Son impressed into his Majestie's Service who has been at sea only one Voyage, we apply'd to Captain Hawker for his Release upon finding a Seaman in his Room, who desired us to apply to your Lordships. The Boy is Young, the Person was have got is a Seaman. We hope your Lordships will be so good as to order his Release and we shall as in duty bound for ever Pray, William and Mary Williams

[Adm 1/1918 H 250]

¹⁸ A "landsman" like Morgan, who had been at sea for 7 years, likely worked on coastal vessels.

336. Captain Thomas Hawker, to Evan Nepean, 4 February 1799

Bristol, February 4th 1799.

Sir,

I received your letter with their Lordships' Order to transmit to them Documents concerning Simon Burn, said to be a Citizen of America; and beg please to inform them that I received an Order to the same purpose dated the 8th of August last which I answered the 12th of the same Month, saying he proved to be a British subject as he own[ed] he was born in Ireland.

NB he has been gone from hence a long time.

[Adm 1/1920 H207]

337. Lieutenant Bowles Mitchell to Evan Nepean, 11 July 1799

Bristol 11th July 1799,

Sir,

Lt. General Rooke commanding this district ...yesterday applied for the discharge of Samuel Brooke, an impressed seaman, on board the *Union* Tender; under the impression of his being an enrolled man of his, to which I referred him to their Lordships, but he rather entered the application thro me. I must therefore acquaint you please to state to their Lordships that he is an able seaman and a young man, just returned from the West Indies, and was in the act of shipping himself again, when impressed. And upon enquiry I find the enrolment to consist only of the Merit he had, among others at Pill (to which placed he belonged) of volunteering their services, in embarking or transporting trows, or any other occasion for the benefit of the service, which General Rooke took so handsomely, as to give these every protection and countenance. I must therefore beg you please to favor me with their Lordships' commands on this occasion, and am, Sir, &c

Lieutenant Bowles Mitchell in the absence of Captain Hawker.

[Adm 1/1920 H224]

338. Lieutenant Bowles Mitchell to Evan Nepean, 30 July 1798

Bristol July 30th 1799

Sir,

Having received your Letter of the 27th wherein I'm ordered to state the situation of the Person named in the enclosed application, you will please to inform their Lordships that Walter Elick and Zacariah Chapman are young Men about twenty years of age, rated landsmen, and that on producing two Able men for John Johnson their Lordships' commands shall be obeyed by discharging him. And you'll also please to acquaint their Lordships that Thomas Radford, the impressed Trowman, is about twenty and has been seven years in them, when I informed Hart, the Petitioner,

it was not in the power of any officer to discharge a Man; and acquainted him where to seek redress, which advice was followed up, by directly after arresting him for considerable Debt to his Father; and in the course of a few Hours after, he was discovered released on board his Trow – after so barefaced an imposition I thought it my duty to have him again taking[taken]; and I've no complaints from the Mayor on the occasion. I also think it necessary to request you'll please to state to their Lordships the reason of so many applications, which I imagine arises from the necessity of detaining the *Union* Tender; having nearly ninety Men and Boys on board. The other tender *Polly*, being ordered to Carlisle, and from the known delays of them in general, may be some time before she arrives, which you'll be pleased to acquaint their Lordships is my reason for detaining her, as it would leave the Port without any receiving Tender. The enclosures are returned as is order[d].

I am Sir &c

Bowles Mitchell, Lieutenant (Captain Hawker Absent on Admiralty leave)

PS The orders for the two Deserters at Marlborough are received, and the Men sent...

[Adm 1/1920 H228]

339. Lieutenant Bowles Mitchell to Evan Nepean, 1 August 1799

Bristol, August 1st, 1799

Sir,

Having made every enquiry possible respecting the allusions[sic] of the inclosed, I can at present find nothing that appears to justify such complaint. And you'll please to inform their Lordships that every possible means is taking[taken] to prevent improper practices which this Service is so much open to. In respect to the Midshipmen, they are of Captain Hawker's approving, and the most decent to be found for this employ; and on enquiry I find one of them belonging to Lieutenant Worth rendezvous, has a Wife who keeps a shop and sells Fruit as represented. But you'll please to assure their Lordships that every attention is paid to the application of old seamen, or Petty Officers, of good character, for any vacancies in this situation.

I am, Sir, &c

Bowles Mitchell, Lieutenant (Captain Hawker absent on Admiralty leave)

[Adm 1/1920 H230]

340. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 21 August 1799

Bristol August 21st, 1799

Sir,

In obedience to their Lordships, I have inclosed the state of Charles Thomas, when he enter'd, he said he had no one to cry for him. He is a single Man and three of his Sisters have been to see him. They said nothing of their Mother's distress inclosed with his Petition at the time of his entry, age &c.

NB when they want to get off, they all say they were Drunk when they enter'd.

[Adm 1/1920 H 236]

341. Lieutenant Bowles Mitchell to Evan Nepean, 7 October 1799

Bristol October 7th 1799

Sir,

I thought it my duty to request you'l[l] please to state to their Lordships the particulars of the rescue of an impressed men, which happened on the 4th and the circumstances attending – when a very considerable body of Ships Carpenters surrounded the Rendezvous, others enter'd the House and carried off (before any intelligence could be sent to the Mayor or Guard) the confined Man, who was lately a Carpenter of a West India Ship, which I understand was their inducement. On my reporting the affair to the Mayor and Aldermen, they where[were] exceedingly ready to take any step for bringing the Ringleaders to justice, but among such a Body, and so quick did they perform their design, that with the greatest enquiry on my Side, and that of the Magistrates, nothing could lead to bring forward any leading Character. Under these circumstances, I think it adviseable to desire the Magistrates to send for the Master Builder, Mr. Hillhouse (a very respectable character) and order him to assemble his Man, and point out in strong language the consequence of such behaviour, and the punishment a[n]nexed to it, and to make report at the Council House, this morning how they received it. And I've[the] great satisfaction to acquaint their Lordships, from Mr. Hillhouse's report, they[the carpenters] appeared highly sensible of their misconduct, and most faithfully promised never to take such steps again, and most sincerely begged Mr. Hillhouse to beg for indulgence. On this I requested the Magistrates to direct the Master Builder to again assemble them and say that in consideration of their Behaviour, and promise, he had by great exertion obtained the Magistrates indulgence by not putting the Law in force – and that the Officers on the Impress Service would endeavour to state their case favourable to their Lordships for their forgiveness, in not ordering a prosecution for such unwarrantable conduct. As it appears very improbable to fix on any[one], and if it was possibly done, I very much fear would occasion some serious riot – [this] makes me have great hopes of meeting their Lordships' approbation – and I hope they will not think me tardy in not immediately acquainting them – as I thought it would be much more to their satisfaction to know how the Magistrates proceeded; who I can assure their Lordships, are exceedingly willing to support Government on this as on all occasions I've had with them, I am, Sir,

Bowles Mitchell, Lieutenant, (Captain Hawker absent on Admiralty leave)

[Adm 1/1920 H 239]

342. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 21 November 1799

Bristol, November 21st 1799

Sir,

I received your's with their Lordships' directions to state the Case of William Ball in my returning from the Rendezvous (where I been to see the Men that were going down), I met Mr. Pocock the Master of the *Union Island*, on his mention[ing] the Men to me. I told him he was not on the Ship's Duty when press'd, he reply'd, he could not say he was. The *Polly*[tender] is now full, and will sail this day, and I beg you will please to inform their Lordships that when she is gone I shall not have one in Kingroad. I wrote to Sir Thomas Pasley to request he would order the *Union* round as soon as possible. His Answer was that she was order[ed] to Liverpool with stores, from thence, here.

PS the *Union Island* is sail'd.

[Adm 1/1920 H 241]

343. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 22 December 1799

Bristol, December 22nd 1799

Sir,

You will see by my Weekly Accounts that I have not a Tender in Kingroad for some time. The *Union* Tender went from thence in August last, since which I have had no regular Intelligence from Lieutenant Bunce, tho' my Orders expressly say that he was to write to me as soon as he arriv'd at any Port and give me his reasons for so doing. If their Lordships know where she[the tender] is, I hope they will please to order her to Kingroad as soon as possible. Lieutenant Kineer[Kinnear] of the *Aimwell* Gun Boat has ben so good as to receive the supernumeraries. She is now quite full, and if their Lordships approve of it, I will order her to Swansea or Milford to put them on board the first Tender he may meet with, and return to Kingroad, and remain till one of the Tenders arrive.

[Adm 1/1920 H243]

344. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 24 December 1799

Bristol, December 24th, 1799

Sir,

I have this moment receiv'd yours acquainting me that their Lordships had sent orders to the Commander of the *Aimwell* Gun Vessel to take such as he could conveniently stow of the supernumeraries to Plymouth. At the same time, to account for my not applying to the Captain of the *Cerberus* to take them; inclosed I send you a Copy of the Letter I wrote to Captain McNamara which was delivered to him by my Servant, by whom he sent me word he would answer it bye & bye, but to which I never had one, the Wind being fair, and the Tender full and knowing the Men were wanting, I sent her away,

[Adm 1/1920 H 245]

345. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 4 March 1800

Bristol, March 4th 1800.

Sir,

I beg you will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that the *Polly* Tender (the only one I have in Kingroad) is now full of supernumeraries, and has her sailing Orders, that there is no other Vessel of any sort to prest them on board, the *Union* Tender having been employ'd ever since last August between Plymouth & Liverpool and I hope their Lordships will be pleased to order some vessel or other to Kingroad to receive those that may be pressed or enter'd.

[Adm 1/1922 H183]

346. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 13 April 1800

Bristol April 13th, 1800

Sir, You will be pleased to inform their Lordships that Lieutenant Worth under my command died yesterday Morning at 9 o'clock in whom I have lost a very steady good Officer and hope their Lordships will approve another.

[Adm 1/1922 H 187]

347. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 15 April 1800

Bristol, April 15th 1800

Sir, I received their Lordships' orders to send to Bath for John Evans, which I have comply'd with. He had a Tickett of Leave from Captain Parr of the *Zealand*, but lost it, and was taken up as a Deserter. This is what he says. He is a black man.

[Adm 1/1922 H188]

348. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 20 April 1800

Bristol, April 20th, 1800

Sir, I this moment received yours, with a Captain Parr's Letter to their Lordships saying he had written to me about John Evans, the black Man which Letter I never received or I shou'd have sent the Tickett to have forwarded him to his Ship and which I will now do and hope their Lordships will approve of it.

[Adm 1/1922 H189]

349. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 24 April 1800

Bristol, April 24th 1800

Sir,

You will please to acquaint their Lordships that the weather has been such that I could not get out of the *Polly* Tender till yesterday. I took Lieutenant Mitchell with me, and we took particular Notice that she was very clean in every part above and below, and the Supernumeraries were also clean and lookd very healthy. Some little time after I have been on board, Lieutenant Kinear of the *Aimwell* Gun Brig came on board, and we all agreed she was in good order. I orderd the Crew & Supernumeraries on Deck and examin'd the Officers' Crew and Supernumeraries concerning the buying and selling of Beds, and Slops, and they all to a Man & Boy except one Thomas Cavanaugh denied ever having bought or sold any Article from each other while they had been on board, and were ready to make Oath to it. With respect to the 8 Men said to be sick that went from the *Polly* to the *Chapman*, Lieutenant Brown said he believd some of them might be so, from Sea sickness as Landmen, but he did not know any fever in the *Polly*, nor have they had any since. He washes her every Sunday with warm Vinegar in every part below, and we all thought she was very clean. I also ask'd if any of the Officers or crew of the *Polly* had ever bought Beds or Slops from those that went from the *Polly* to the *Chapman* at Milford. Their answer was the same. I observe in the List that John Henly, who laid the Complaint before Captain Keen, is mention'd as one of the Purchasers himself. I have put a Cross against his Name, in short we saw no one thing amiss on the Vessel or People on board to complain of, The inclos'd is a Letter I receivd since from Lieutenant Brown requesting I would send it.

Enclosure.

Honored Sir,

Have to solicit your favor on behalf of Thomas Lewis, a poor lad from this place who is now on board the Tender in King Road, having but lately entered and never been to sea in his life. His poor disconsolate parents being informed that on their procuring a person in his Stead he should be liberated. Having sold their Cow (the only beast they had in the World and which at this same and distressing time contributed much to the support of themselves and family) in order to raise a little money for that purpose, they beg leave to inform you they have one ready and if not approved of they will get another, which they hope you will be pleased to accept of and favor them with the discharge of their poor Child, in so doing you will alleviate much the distress of a poor indigent family and greatly oblige, Honored Sir, Your most obedient Humble Servant, Thomas Morgan.

2nd enclosure:

Sheffield Place

10 July 1800

Dear Sir,

I shall be thankful if you will take under your protection the business of the inclosed letter which came from one of the most reputable Men of Bristol & an active & strenuous friend to Government.

That my Letter may be as little trouble to you as possible, it shall now conclude.

I have the honor to be, &c, Sheffield.

3rd enclosure

My Lord,

Having so often intruded on your kindness I scarce know how again to apply to you, but the circumstances of the case are such that I do not feel justified if I omitted any mode of endeavouring to relieve the distress of an honest fellow in my Parish whose son has in a drunken fit enterd on board the *Man of War* now at Kingroad & as a great part of the support of the family depends on his labour I venture again to solicit your Lordship,s interest at the Admiralty to get him released and another proper person being found to supply his place. His name is Charles Long of the Parish of Stapleton now on board the *Union* Tender at Kingroad. I was in the hopes of doing this in another way but I find the only chance I have is thru your goodness & the ship sailing in a few days obliges me to[avail myself of?] this moment. My father is very tolerably well at Stapleton & I know would have requested me to present his compliments. I remain,

Your Lordships' very Obligated & Obedient Humble Servant,
Charles Jos. Harford.

[Adm 1/1922 H 191]

350. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 28 July 1800

Bristol July 28, 1800

Sir,

I received your Lordships' Letter concerning the supernumeraries at Plymouth in the *Union* Tender and hope when they read the inclosed from Mr Shute who has management of the Naval Hospital here, they will be so good as to judge more favourable on my Conduct, until the Business is further investigated, as he means to re-examine them on their return to Kingroad.

With respect to classing the Boys I never had any orders, or Instructions for so doing, but will thank their Lordships for such, that I may not err in future in that Point.

In rating the men I will be more particular, but it often happens when they get to different ships they rate them according to their Judgment. From what I have stated, I hope their Lordships will not stop my Wages, but prevent the Impress being put against me, as the Men and Boys proving unserviceable, I hope will not be the cause of attaching any blame on me after what the Surgeon has said in the inclosed[letter].

Enclosed:

Park Street, July 28, 1800

Sir,

In answer to yours inclosing a Letter from the Admiralty Office dated the 25th Inst., I have to inform you that I cannot conceive that any of the Men were incapacitated by Illness at the time of their being receivd on Board the Tender, as the men were minutely examin'd. It is indeed possible that considerable confinement in point of Time on Board previous to their sailing & during their passage to Plymouth may have reduc'd them both in Health & Strength. These however are circumstances

which it is impossible for any one to guard against, & for which no Medical Skill can possibly be answerable.

I am Sir,

Your obedient Humble servant, Thomas Shute.

[Adm 1/1922 H 191]

351. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 1 August 1800

Bristol, August 1st, 1800

Sir, I received your Letter owning the Receipt of mine to their Lordships in Answer to theirs dated the 25th of last Month. The Reason I mention'd the Classing of Boys a List was sent with those said to[be] unserviceable saying their Classes were alter'd, which seem'd to say I had done it improperly. I never set them down any other ways than Boys. I am sorry that Lieutenant Rogers, by complying with Sir Thomas Pasley's Orders, had put them all on Shore as soon as he arrived in Kingroad, before my Note cou'd get to him which frustrated our design of examining them. He told me he had not a Man or Boy sick, or ill, when he arrivd at Plymouth, and he thought them a good set of Men and Boys as he had seen a long time. Inclosd I send you Mr. Shute's Letter I have this moment receiv'd which when their Lordships have seen, and from what I have explain'd, I hope they will lay no blame to me, or stop my wages, for it would be extreemly hard that I should suffer for the Neglect or mistakes of others. And I hope their Lordships will duly consider the case and take[*note?*] of the Impress. I owe the Surgeon for the 6 Month up to last June, but cannot pay him till their Lordships consent to it. The only Boy I have seen return'd I duly took out of Charity having neither Father, Mother or Friend. He is upward of fifteen, rather short, but perfectly in health. I have seen also one of the Young men about twenty three has been three years and a half at sea. I ask'd what he was discharged for. He said he did not know. He was perfectly well. I was particular with him, ask'd if he had ever meet[*met*] with any accident; he answer'd not, that he was as well as ever he was. His looks were pale only. I shoud be very sorry for my Character as an old officer to send any improper Man or Boy, nor woud I if I knew him to be such.

Margin: Send up the letter from Sir Thomas Pasley about them.

Enclosed:

Sir, I am much disappointed in not being able to see the Men returnd from Plymouth previous to their quitting the Tender. I have however made every enquiry in my power & the following is the result.

Six or eight men were not sent from Bristol, at least they were never examin'd , nor are they upon the Books, so that it is probable they were put on Board at some other port. Such Men as we have been able to meet with had no Disease specified on their Discharge Tickets, & declare themselves to be free from Complaint, to the best of their knowledge. We have the strongest Reasons for asserting that Sixteen or Eighteen of them have actually taken service on Board Merchant Men, a thing which could not possibly happen had they been incapacitated by Illness. In short, it appears to me, that I have a right to afarm[*affirm*] it as a Fact, that very few

if any were rejected on account of Bodily Infirmities. If however it be recollected that many of them were entered two, & some three months previous to their going round to Plymouth, some allowance shall be made for the natural consequences of such Confinement on Board a Tender, & I can only add, that I am confident that no attention was wanting at the time of their Entry, & from the Result of my Enquiries, I am fully persuaded that few if any were incapacitated from service by the state of their Health, as to every other cause of rejection I can pretend to give no opinion.

I am, Sir, your Most Obedient Humble Servant, Thomas Shute.

P.S. Allow me to add that Men will sometimes enter, & be afterwards anxious to get return'd. In such circumstances, there is no assertion as to their health which they will not readily have recourse to, A Fact well known to every Medical Man who has been in the least conversant with the Service.

[Adm 1/1922 H 197b]

352. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 10 August 1800

Bristol, August 10th 1800

Sir, I find the Case of Jonathan Evans to be thus. He has a Wife whose support entirely depends on him, her Husband, and she is now pregnant. His Master has been with me, and I have seen the Woman.

I have returned the Indentures.

Enclosed:

8 August 1800.

Sir, Inclosed are the Indentures of Jonathan Evans, an apprentice of John Dando of the city of Bristol, hatmaker, having some dispute with his family, entered on Board the Tender and is now lying in Kingroad & very solicitous to return, which cannot, we understand, be accomplished but thro your interference. Should you take it into consideration to get him liberated, should feel myself under the greatest obligations,

I am, Sir, your very humble Servant, John Dando.

[Adm 1/1922 H201]

353. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 22 August 1800

Bristol, August 22nd 1800

Sir,

I received their Lordships' Order respecting the *Sheerness* Tender and have given Lieutenant Keenan Orders to proceed to Plymouth as soon as he gets rid of the French Prisoners, but have put more of the Men from the Tenders under my Command on board her as he informed me they were very sickly; and which I hope their Lordships will approve of; and in a few days shall have the *Polly* Tender with a significant Number to take round.

[Adm 1/1922 H202]

354. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 5 September 1800

Bristol, September 5th, 1800

Sir,

I receiv'd their Lordships order to inquire into the dispute between Mr Durant and Lieutenant Fraser. On the receipt of the Letter I went immediately to the Talbot, and cou'd not find that anyone knew such a person; and have ever since been endeavouring to find out the Parties, for at the time it happen'd Mr. Wakefield the Midshipman did not know any of them, or where to find them, and we came to the knowledge of them by Chance. A Mr. Blake passing by knew them, and having heard of our enquiries, told me where to find Mr. Camplin and 'twas only this day that I could get under his hand the Conduct of Lieutenant Fraser, and I have inclosed such as I could collect, which I think, notwithstanding Mr. Durant's Letter may be among news, it will still appear that his Conduct was not that of a Gentleman, far from it. He says in his Letter of 2nd September that since he has been employ'd here he has been more active in pressing men than has been the Case, and supposes it might have given umbrage to some of the merchantile[sic] men with respect to his activity. I may say with a safe Conscience that I don't think he has been three days together perfectly sober since he has been here, of course must have neglected his duty by not being able to go to the Rendezvous for many days. He seems also to hint that his doing his duty in the manner he represented to their Lordships has been construed into over Assiduity, tho he is fully enabled to say no interested views shall cause him to neglect. If he knew of any one that was interested, and had acted wrong, he was equally culpable in not making me acquainted with it, therefore must have conniv'd at it. In his postscript his having pressed two men (which he says is uncommon here, altho' employed for that purpose) strikes at my Conduct which I hope has not displeased their Lordships in that time I have been here, which will be eight years next December, and as I am now to give my real Sentiments, a Drunkard is not fit to be trusted on any publick Service. I therefore hope their Lordships will be so good as to remove him from hence. I have the honor to be, &c.

Enclosure

Bristol 5th Sept 1800

Francis Fraser did not in my hearing make use of the language mentioned in a Letter address'd to you by J Durant, that of Damning the King & yourself, but he was the Evening alluded to much intoxicated. A friend and myself happen'd to pass him on the Quay & seeing him in that situation just as we pass'd him look back towards him when he ran at us with his Stick lifted up threatening to[k]nock us down, saying at the same time "Damme I am a Navy Officer, what do you look at me for" & using other violent language which I cannot recollect.

I am, Sir, Your most obedient servant, Thomas Camplin.

My friend ... alluded to in the former part of my Letter is Sir Henry Melhuish[Mellish?], Wincanton, Somerset.

[Adm 1/1922 H205]

355. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 21 September 1800

Bristol, September 21st 1800

Sir, you will be please to lay before their Lordships the inclosed Letter and Protection. I have been in search of Robert Redman ever since I received[the] Captain[’s letter?] and have the satisfaction to say that he is now well secured on board His Majesty’s Gun Brig *Aimwell*, Lieut Kineer, as their Lordships will see by Lieutenant Roger’s Letter of the *Union* Tender.

Enclosure
Royal William, Spithead
Sept 4 1800
Dear Sir,

Having been informed that a Man who belonged to the *Hermione*¹⁹ had arrived in one of the ships from the West Indies & had landed at Cowes, from thence proceeded to Southampton & intended going to Bristol. I beg you will cause a search to be made from him, & as this notice may possibly reach you in time to get hold of him, I shall thank you for the time if you succeed. On the other side is his description. I hope you are perfectly well, excuse haste and believe me always, yours faithfully,
Thomas Wickmore

Verso: Robert Redman is the Name he has assumed, as he has an American protection by that name.[He] is about five feet five inches high, rather light & Red Complexion, very thin, freckled in the face & has sore hands, his arms much marked with Indian Ink, & has a bend forward in walking. He came home in the Brig *Rodney* from Jamaica, Mr. Thomas Davidson, Master. He has large Red Whiskers.

Nb. The Master of the Brig gives this Information, which he has only obtained since Redman left the ship.

2nd Enclosure:

Union, King Road, September 20 1800

Sir, I beg leave to acquaint you that I have taking[taken] Robert Redman and have put him aboard the *Aimwell* agreeable to your instructions.[I] will wait on you tomorrow morning to lett you know the particulars.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant, John Rogers.

[Adm 1/1922 H206]

356. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 20 September 1800

Enclosure:
Lieutenant Francis Kinnear to Captain Thomas Hawker

¹⁹ There was a violent mutiny on the *Hermione* in 1797, with republican sentiments voiced by some of the mutineers. On the mutiny see Dudley Pope, *The Black Ship* (London, 1988); Jonathan Neale, *The Cutlass and the Lash*, 1–4; Leonard F. Guttridge, *Mutiny, A History of Naval Insurrection* (Annapolis, 2006), 77–80.

Sir,

In obedience to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, as signified to me in your Letter of the 24th Ult., I embraced the first favourable wind to Sail hence with the Prisoners under my Charge, but the easterly wind did not last me to Minehead. I however got as far as the Foreland in this Channel, when it blew so hard from the SW that I was forced back to Portishead roads, whence I was driven by the wind veering to N.W. into Kingroad .

I must acquaint you that the present appearance of the weather precludes all hope of my being able to sail soon, and even should the wind come to the Eastward and run us to Scilly Islands, I may be there detained a great length of time at this season of the year, for I deem it impracticable to beat this Class of vessels up the English Channel.

I conceive then, Sir, that an application to Lieut General Rook of this District for an escort from the Inniskillen Dragoons, now in Bristol, to convey the Prisoners by land to Portsmouth would be a better & far more expeditious mode of transporting them thither than the great uncertainty of my being able to make a good passage round the Land.

They may be mounted behind the Dragoons and arrive there in three days. And I was, owing to Gales of Wind, more than two months coming from Spithead to this station. Besides I should apprehend their lordships are an anxious to punish these men if they prove guilty, as they will, in case of their Innocence, be eager to release them from a close confinement, which has already a visible effect on their healths. I request your speedy answer to my suggestion, and remain, Sir,

Your very Honourable Servant, Francis W Kenneer.

[Adm 1/1922 H 208]

357. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 26 October 1800

Bristol October 26, 1800

Sir,

On the receipt of the enclos'd from Sir John Durbin, Alderman, I gave up the Man therein mentioned that, in case the Trial should not be over before the Tender sails, their Lordships may be informed of it.

Enclosed:

The Bearer Isaac Light,

Stephen Smith, Captain Hawker may be assured, shall be delivered up again to his order as soon as clear'd by due course of law by the civil power

27 October 1800, John Durbin

The accusation against him[is] his wilfully sinking a ship to defraud the insurers.

[Adm 1/1922 H206]

358. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 28 October 1800

Bristol, October 28, 1800

Sir,

I have this moment received your's of yesterday's date respecting Thomas Rice Chandler. On the receipt of their Lordships' Order to send to Bath for him, I did so (which order was dated the 19th of last month) and answered it on the 23rd and inclos'd a letter from the magistrates of Bath, saying his Father had produc'd a Ticket of Leave from Lieut. Kinnear, which did not expire till the 25th. The Magistrates then set him at Liberty on his Father's promise to bring him to me, and also a Promise of his returning to his Duty. On his non-performance I sent a Midshipman for him. On his return he told me he was gone out of Town and they did not know where.

[Adm 1/1922 H211]

359. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 16 November 1800

Bristol November 16th 1800

Sir, I have this moment received your Letter with the Admiralty order to discharge Thomas Parfery as having been press'd. I beg leave to remark to you that he was not[impressed]. He enter'd as you will see by the returned Inclosure.

Enclosure:

November 12th 1800

Sir,

At the instance of Captain Oakes of the Tender now lying at King-Road near Bristol, I beg leave to inform you that my apprentice Thomas Parfery has enter'd himself on board the Tender and thereby deprives me of his services, that I have produced to the Captain the Indentures of apprenticeship and he is perfectly satisfied of their being in full force, but that he could not justify himself in delivering up the Lad without an order from you. I have therefore to entrust your kindness in sending an order to the captain for his discharge before the Tender sails in which you will serve and oblige your very obedient humble servant,

John Frost

East Brent, near Axbridge, Somerset

[Adm 1/1922 H213]

360. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 8 December 1800

Bristol, December 8th 1800

Sir,

You will[please] to acquaint their Lordships the *Polly* Tender has now on board near 50 supernumeraries, but she is not in a Condition to proceed to sea with them,

owing entirely to the Neglect of the Owners and Master, tho they have been apply'd to constantly these 6 weeks past and nothing done. The *Sheerness* Tender is arriv'd here from Cork with some Kinsale Baggage, and if not wanted on any other Service, I hope their Lordships will please to order them[the supernumeraries] on board to take them to Plymouth.

[Adm 1/1922, H215]

361. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 16 January 1801

Bristol, January 16th 1801

Sir,

I beg leave you will please to inform their Lordships that the *Polly* Tender has been wind bound at Milford[Haven] full of men; and the *Union* at this Port is filling fast; which when full, I shall be at a loss how to dispense of the others that may come. I therefore hope their Lordships will be pleas'd to order them to be put on board one of His Majesty's Ships (of any shape) that the *Polly* may return to Kingroad.

[Adm 1/1924, H 143]

362. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 29 Januaury 1801

Bristol, January 29th 1801

Sir,

In answer to your's, for their Lordships' information, Thomas Fisher was press'd by Lieutenant Mayne. He went into the Rendezvous rather in Liquor, and was very impertinent to the whole of the Gang, saying they had no Business to press any seamen. Mr Mayne kept[him] till he was sober, examin'd & found him to be a very good seaman, 20 Years of Age, 3 Years at sea, rated able, and Examin'd by the Surgeon. W[h]ether he is the support of his Mother I know not, but Mr Ezra Powell, Minister of Tintern Abbey, and ci-devant Chaplain of his Majesty's Ship *Ajax*, ought to know if he is so, or not,

[Adm 1/1924, H144]

363. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 22 March 1801

Bristol March 22nd 1801

Sir, Herewith you will receive (for their Lordships' Information) a Report of the Case of Samuel Short of Gloucester, Hatter, entered 22nd of February, 22 Years of Age, five feet three inches, of a Fresh Complexion, married, and has a Family in Bristol,

Enclosure:

Dear Sir,

Having received your kind assistance in respect to the Discharge of my son Samuel Short, on board the *Polly* Tender, and having to Informe you that it was an Intire Omission in me, in not sending the Indenture for your Inspection, the which I have here Inclosed in this[letter] and hopes it will be of service to get my son off, should it have the desired affect[effect] with my Lords Commissioners. I hope you will please to be so kind as to Forward the same as soon as possible as they are near on sailing.

I remain, Dear Sir, your humble and obliged servant, Wm Short.

[Adm 1/1924 H 156]

364. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 15 April 1801

Bristol April 15th 1801

Sir,

I received your Letter and am very sorry such a Fever broke out on board the *Polly* Tender. I cannot account for it, as my positive written Orders to the Lieutenant are never to keep a Man or Boy on board that has the Least Complaint, but send them to the Hospital immediately to prevent sickness; and by Lieutenant Brown's Letter (which I receiv'd a few days before she sail'd) he said the supernumeraries were in perfect health, and as a precaution I always send the examining surgeon to examine them on board they sail. My Further Orders are to keep the Vessels clean, exercise them with the Mizen topsail, and keep them clean, and when I have visited them I have found them so, if they are sent from the Hospital too soon the Surgeon must be the Judge...I believe 'tis the first Instant of a Fever breaking out in the Tenders. From hence the same caution I have hitherto taken shall be constant.

[Adm 1/1924 H159]

365. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 29 April 1801

Bristol, April 29th 1801

Sir,

I received your Letter with their Lordships' Order to state to them the Reason for my detaining William Brown, press'd by Lieutenant Mitchell's Gang under my Command. He was press'd on shore, and it has been ever a Custom for the Masters of the Market Boats and Trows to have a certificate from the Chief Magistrate to certify the Name of the Vessel, and the number of the crew; which Certificate was sent to me from the Magistrate to put my Name to it, which when produc'd they were liberated. The Master of the Vessel never claim'd him with such Certificate, and to prevent any imposition[imposition?] I kept him, for 'tis possible, and very probable, a Master of any of these vessels may screen many a man by saying they belonged to his Master's Boat, or Trow.

Enclosure:

Bristol, April 15th 1801

My Lords,

I am sorry to intrude on your Lordships more important avocations with a complaint that the Regulating Captain here has impress'd William Brown, one of the crew of the Trow William of Bewdley, which brings regularly down the Severn goods & provisions to this City & is of the description of Vessels protected by your Lordships for the supply of our Markets. Captain Halker[sic] holds him, because the Master of the Trow to which he belongs did not produce his Certificate, that He & his Men were protected tho' he[Hawker] well knew him to be one of the Trows which he had agreed not to meddle with.

I therefore apply to your Lordships on behalf of this City of which I am chief Magistrate with a request that you will be pleas'd to direct Capt. Halker[sic] to deliver up the said William Brown & that you will order him not to interrupt our Market Boats, the free passage of which is absolutely necessary for our supply of food.

I am, My Lords, &c, William Gibbons, Mayor

[Adm 1/1924 H161]

366. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 6 May 1801

Bristol, May 6th 1801

Sir, I have this Moment receiv'd your Letter, with their Lordships' Directions to state to them

The Case of William Fuller, which is as follows. When he was press'd he said he belong'd to a Trow, after which he said he never was in one, which I imagined was not true as he had a Sailor's dress on, and had every appearance of having worked in them. We have met with several who have denied ever having been on the water, and I thought it prudent to keep him till it was clear'd up.

[Adm 1/1924 H 162]

367. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 17 May 1801

Bristol, May 17th 1801

Sir, Please to acquaint their Lordships the Union Tender is now quite full, and hope (if there is any King's Ships or Vessel at Milford) they will please to order them to be received here, as she[the *Union* Tender] only waits for a Wind. My reason for wishing her to go no further[westward] is that I have no other Tender, and she can get from thence back sooner from Plymouth. I have only two Tenders on this station and one or the other is frequently Order[ed] to Liverpool,[so] that I am at a loss what to do with the supernumeraries.[I] have been sometimes oblig'd to subsist them on shore by which means they may have opportunities of deserting and if it please their Lordships I hope they will order another[Tender].

[Adm 1/1924 H 163]

368. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 29 June 1801

Bristol, June 29th 1801

Sir,

I have this moment received a Letter from the Agent Victualler at Milford[Haven] saying the London Packett was not arriv'd but expected every day, that the *Chapman* was there and supposed would remain some time. As soon as I know she is arrived I will send the *Union*[tender] with the Men. I have this day received a Letter from Lieutenant Brown of the *Polly* Tender at Liverpool; he has received orders to remain there to receive men for the Fleet; of course she will not be this way a long time, and I have only the *Union*. I hope their Lordships will please to order another Tender here, as we always lose Men when obliged to subsist them on shore.

[Adm 1/1924 H 170]

369. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 26 July 1801

Bristol, July 26 1801

Sir,

I received your Letter to acquaint me their Lordships will not admit of any charge being brought against the Public on account of Dennis Crawley, Patrick Martin and James Lance.

I gave orders for them to be taken off and I will settle it.

I now hope their Lordships will not be offended at some Remark I shall make re Dennis Crawley. Lieut. Mitchell and myself interrogated him very strictly concerning his Age. He was positive in saying he was not more than 30 or 40 at most. He is a hardy seafaring looking man, and repeatedly said he was as well as ever he was in his Life, and as capable of doing his Duty as ever. But there is certainly a vast difference between 39 and 49, and I think we cou'd not both be so much mistaken or deceived as that. The Rheumatism is a disorder that any man may complain of at any time to answer his purpose, and no one can positively say that he has it not; and the best of men may be deceiv'd in that as well as in the age of a Person. Some look young, some older than they really are, and he may have deceiv'd those who re-examin'd them, and these Tricks I fear are often playd to get off when they have been fed and clothed, and by that means many an able man may be lost to the service; besides all this, I have know many get sick and hurt in being so long getting round to Plymouth, and I can safely say that I and my officers have, and will be very particular in examining the Volunteers and press'd Men, and if a Man is seafaring I always ask him if he ever belonged to a Man of War. If he has, how he was discharg'd. Many have been discharg'd unsoweciable[unsociable?] and shew their Ticketts, and I have refused them, tho to every appearance and by the examination of the Surgeon perfectly well. Some again will not own ever being in a man of war, and by the methods appear to be in perfect health. I take them when they get round to Plymouth they show a discharge Ticket and get off. These things often happen, and by these means the best of us are deceived. Therefore when found out they ought to be severely punished. If a man produces a discharge Ticket when

he gets round to Plymouth, they may be as[s]ur'd they never produc'd them to me or my Officers tho[they] always ask'd the question; inclosed one of their Entries at the Rendezvous. With respect to the surgeon's business, I cannot be accountable for[that], therefore hope their Lordships will not think it improper to set the Charges against him if he failed in the examining them.

[Adm 1/1924 H 173]

370. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 16 August 1801

Bristol, August 16th 1801

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that for some time back, every able and ordinary seamen that we have impressed have been immediately arrested by the Sheriff's Officers, both from the Rendezvous and with the Silver Oar from the Tenders which you may see by my late Weekly Accounts. If the Tide serves we send them on board in hopes of preventing it, to no avail. I thought it my Duty to acquaint their Lordships as perhaps they may in some manner prevent it.

I have the honor to be, &c

Thos. Hawker

[Adm 1/1924 H 174]

371. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 7 October 1801

Enclosure:

Bristol October 7th 1801

Sir,

Inclosed is the Bill I received this Day from Mr Merricks, the Mayor's Clerk, for the prosecution against that Very ill behaved Woman, Mrs Williams, who you know assaulted & otherways so insulted the Gangs, & Incouraging a Mob abt. The Rendezvous, which put a stop to Volunteers for some time & obliged me to apply to the Mayor to Punish her & her Husband or the Service Could not be Carried On.

I therefore Riquest you will please to pay the Bill as it was for the Good of his Majesty's Service.

I am, Sir, with Respect, your most humble servant, Rbt. Mayne.

The King agst Williams on the prosecution of John Fry for an assault	
Retainer and Instructions	4s 4d
Examining Witnesses touching this Affair	
And taking instructions for Indictment	6s
Drawing Indictment	6s 8d
Ingrossing	2s
Parchment	1s

Midsummer session 1801

Paid in Court allowing Indictment	2s
Attending for That Purpose	6s 8d
Paid Cryer and Bailiff Errant for 3 Witnesses	3s
Sessions Fee	6s 8d
Attending to obtain Warrant on the Indictment	6s 8d
Paid for Warrant	2s 6d
Instructing the Officer	3s 4d
Total	£2 11s 6d.

[Adm 1/1924 H179]

372. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, 24 September 1801

Bristol, September 24th 1801

Sir,

In obedience to the Lordships' Commands I have here stated the Case of John Jones, who when he was pressed said he did not belong to the *Carleon* (the Vessel he came to Bristol in) but was only a Passenger. Soon after the Master of the said Vessel came to demand him as a Man belonging to the *Carleon* under a Protection as a Market Boat for three Men, but no Names were specified in the said Protection. I then ordered him on board the *Union* Tender and she is saild. I beg Leave to make one Remark. They try all ways and means to deceive us, and I cannot think that while their Vessels are repairing they keep the Master or Men in pay.

[Adm 1/1924 H 180]

373. Captain Thomas Hawker to Evan Nepean, December 1801

Enclosure:

Bristol Council House,

December 18, 1801

Samuel Worrall, Town Clerk, to Earl St Vincent.

My Lord,

I have the honor to inform your Lordship that at a Quarterly Meeting of the Mayor, Aldermen & Common Council of this City in Common Council Assembled, it was unanimously agreed and ordered that the thanks of the Corporation of the City of Bristol be give to Thomas Hawker Esquire, late Regulating Captain of this Port, for his great attention in conducting the Impress Service during the late war so much in the interest of the public and peace of this City. And it was ordered at the same meeting of the Corporation that I should address your Lordships requesting you to transmit such thanks to Captain Hawker,

I have the honor to be, My Lord with great respect,

Your Lordships most obedient and most humble servant,

Samuel Worrall, Town Clerk.

[Adm 1/1924 H 183]

374. Charles Bicknell, Admiralty Solicitor, to Evan Nepean, 13 August 1801

Norfolk Street, London.
13 August 1801

Sir,

In obedience to the Directions of My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty signified to me in your letter of the 4th Instant (inclosing a letter from Mr. William Buckley of Bristol upon the subject of the two seamen belonging to one of His Majesty's Ships in the West Indies having deserted, and who were afterwards received and secreted on board a Merchant Ship and Brought to England) that I should correspond with Mr. Buckley and take such Measures as I might think proper to bring forward the Evidence Mr. Buckley mentions, I beg leave to acquaint you... that I have corresponded with Mr. Buckey on the subject of his Letter, and have caused the Examination of the two seamen he produced as Evidence against the Captain of the Merchant Ship to be taken and which I take the Liberty to inclose for the Information of their Lordships; and I am humbly of Opinion that unsupported by other Evidence it would not be sufficient to support a prosecution against the Captain for enticing or harbouring and secreting the Deserters from his Majesty's Service.

I am, Sir... Charles Bicknell.

Enclosed: The Examination of Peter Peterson, late of the Ship *Diana* belonging to the port of Bristol commanded by Captain Thomas Ronaldson.

Saith that this Examinant sailed as a Seaman on board the *Diana* on her late Voyage from Jamaica to Bristol, saith that while the said Subject *Diana* was at Morant Bay in Jamaica, two seamen calling themselves Hawkins and Johnstone were taken on board. That he, this Examinant, remembers a dispute between Captain Ronaldson & the said two Seamen and the Captain threatening to send them on board a Man of War but does not remember that either of the Men accused the Captain of enticing them from his Majesty's Service, Saith that at the time the said two Seamen came on board the *Diana* this Examinant was there but he ...did not know where the said two men came from tho' he hath since heard they were Deserters from his Majesty's Employ.

[Adm 1/3688, 13 August 1801]

375. Charles Bicknell to Evan Nepean, 20 August 1801

Norfolk Street, 20th August 1801

Sir,

In obedience to the Directions of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty signified to me in your letter of the 17th Instant (inclosing a Letter from Captain Hawker, Regulating Officer at Bristol, representing that every able and ordinary seaman lately impressed at that Port have been immediately arrested by the Sheriff's Officers, both from the Rendezvous and with the Silver Oar from the Tenders) that I should take such steps as the circumstances of the case might appear upon investigation to require, I take the Liberty to acquaint you...that the Practice

stated by Captain Hawker has long been the Subject of Complaint from most of the Regulating Officers in the Country and by which very good Seaman are taken out of His Majesty's Service, many upon Arrests from fictitious Debts, and many upon Arrests for real Debts which for the Recovery of, no Action would have been commenced for the sake of taking the Debtor out of His Majesty's Service; and there does not appear to me to be any remedy for this collusion but an application to the Legislature to oblige every Sheriff's Officer, who arrested a Seaman in his Majesty's Service for Debt, to give what shall be deemed a reasonable Notice to the nearest Regulating Captain of the action for which the Seaman was arrested being settled, before he discharged him out of his Custody; so that when the Plaintiff's Demand (being real or fictitious) is satisfied, the Seaman may be restored to the Service, which would...prevent in a very strong Degree, the Mischief complained of.

Margin: desire he will prepare the Clause of a Bill to that Effect. Acquaint Captain Hawker.

[Adm 1/3688, 20 August 1801]

G: THE NAPOLEONIC WARS, 1803–1815

376. Captain William Prowse to Evan Nepean, 28 March 1803

HMS *Sirius*, Kingroad Bristol, 28th March 1803

Sir,

Be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that in consequence of the arrangements made by Captain Barker for carrying the Impress Service into Execution at this Port and his requesting me ...to render my assistance thereunto, I deemed it necessary for His Majesty's Service to send the Boats of the Ship under my Command with proper Officers Seaman and Marines to put themselves under the Orders of Captain Barker for that purpose, He being better acquainted with Bristol and its vicinity. The Service was carried into Execution on Saturday Evening and the Boats returned to the Ship by 2 o'clock AM. The Tide flowing till near 9 o'clock following, I dispatched the Launch with Lieutenant Norman and a party of Marines to Bristol, but am informed from the rapidity of the Ebb it having made at 9 o'clock the Boat was prevented getting higher than Clifton one mile below Bristol. Lieutenant Norman and his party went from thence to Captain Barker to ask if he had any Men to send on board, who replied in the affirmative. On Lt Norman's arrival at Bristol a Mob collected and followed him to Capt. Barker's and from thence to the guard room of the 1st regiment of Dragoon Guards where the Impressed Men were confined, huzzaing and using language of the most inflammatory kind. The men were put under the charge of Lt. Norman and his party, assisted by a Guard of the above regiment in order to their being embarked in the Boat and conveyed on board the Ship.

I am informed on their leaving the Guard-room a Multitude of People variously armed with Bludgeons &c assembled and repeatedly attempted to rescue the impressed men; they were as repeatedly desired to desist, and Lt Norman ordered the Marines, in order to intimidate the Mob, to Fire over their heads which was complied with, but had a contrary effect the Mob became outrageous and closely assaulted the party and knocked several of them down. The Marines at length in self-defence,

without further orders fired on the people by which one Boy was killed and several others wounded. They succeeded in getting the Men to the Boat, but the Civil Power issued a warrant for apprehending Lt Norman and his party and in consequence have detained two private marines and bound other officers to appear at their examination. Lieutenant Norman and one other Marine is also missing. The above is the whole of the circumstance I have been able to collect at present, but shall endeavour to make myself better informed for their Lordships' information, and in the meantime beg directions for my further proceeding relative to the Officers and Men detained by the Civil Power.

I am not able by this Post to send a detail of the examinations.

I have the honour to remain, Sir, your most humble and obedient servant, William Prowse.

Margin: 29 March desire him to send me copies of the Examinations & let me know what farther accounts may be obtained of the Lieutenant & Man missing.

[Adm 1/3688, 20 August 1801]

377. Captain William Prowse to William Marsden, Secretary to the Admiralty, 30 March 1803

His Majesty's Ship *Sirius*

Kingroad, Bristol, 30 March 1803

Sir,

Be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the Coroner's Inquest was yesterday held on the Body of the Boy who was killed in the attempt of the Mob to rescue the Impressed Men and I am happy to inform their Lordships that the Verdict (on consequence of several respectable Gentlemen of this Town voluntarily coming forward with their Evidence) brought in "Justifiable Homicide", consequently the Marines in custody liberated. Lieutenant Norman and the Marine who were missing returned to the Ship after my former Letter was sent to their Lordships and are now on board.

If your Lordships wish to have copies of the Examinations that were taken I shall endeavour to procure them from the coroner.

[Adm 1/2326 P372]

***378. Resistance to Impressment ashore, March–May 1803**

*Impressment began on 26 March 1803 with soldiers lining the bridges in and out of the City. 200 were secured and detained all night. Only 15 of these were eventually kept for sea service. They were escorted by dragoons and marines from HMS *Ceres* to Rownham passage. "The spectators (many of them women and children) began to hoot the military and stigmatize them with opprobrious epithets." Stones were thrown, marines fired on crowd, one boy is killed and three other spectators were wounded. Mr Joyner of Berkeley,

the coroner of Gloucestershire, said the firing was “justifiable homicide.” Depositions laid before the grand jury talked of the “very outrageous conduct of the mob.” Three marines, who had been committed to jail at Lawford’s Gate by the mayor, were freed.

[*Bonner and Middleton’s Bristol Journal*, 2 April 1803]

Monday afternoon, as the press-gang and a party of marines were conducting some of the pressed men to Lamplighter’s Hall in order to put them on board his Majesty’s frigate in Kingroad, Bristol, they were violently assaulted in Hotwell Road by a large mob, who flung mud and stones, which so irritated the military that they fired among them, and a boy was killed, and two or three wounded.

[*Newcastle Courant*, 2 April 1803.]

*Orders given by the Admiralty to grant no protections, as seamen were urgently needed. The hot press was renewed on 7 and 8 May 1803. The Pill pilots hid themselves and refused to navigate the river and prevented others from doing so. On 12 May 1803 there was a scuffle at Pill as the Cork packet, the *Sturdy Beggars*, approached. A mob hailed the boat with stones.

[*Bonner and Middleton’s Bristol Journal*, 14 May 1803]

***379. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 22 May 1803**

Barker was asked to give information on the numbers of vessels employed at Pill for piloting, with the number of men in each vessel. There were 25 skiffs employed, each one carrying two men and a boy, besides the pilot, with the exception of two, which carry three men and a boy. There were 43 pilots “who have a Branch.” He enclosed a list of pilots and their assistants at Pill, dated 12 May 1803.

[Adm 1/1528 B38]

380. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 24 May 1803

Bristol, 24 May 1803

Agreeable to the seventh article of my instructions, I have given a certificate from Seamen brought by order of the magistrates from Tewkesbury, but the collector of the Customs of this City (to whom it was addressed) refuses to pay the reward and allowances for travelling as is usual, being directed by the Lords of the Treasury not to do so, when a regulating officer is employed in Bristol. I therefore request their Lordships’ directions how to act under those circumstances in the future.

[Adm 1/1528 B38a]

381. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 22 June 1803

Bristol 22 June 1803

I beg you will acquaint the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that no tender has joined this Station but the *Cleveland*, which vessel sailed for Plymouth the 2nd June and is not returned. I have therefore been put to great difficulty in securing the men that have been raised in her absence, and some good seamen may now be procured, provided I had the means of sending them away.

[Adm 1/1528 B40]

382. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 5 July 1803

Bristol 5 July 1803

I herewith enclose you a Protection produced by Cato Martin, a Black Man lately arrived in the *Dolly* (belonging to this Port) from the West Indies. He calls himself an American but having no proof of it, and the enclosed protection being evidently made out for a White Man, I have impressed him and put him on board the tender. I have also impressed Charles Miles belonging to the *Maria* West Indiaman, he having been one voyage on trial before he was apprenticed. I am induced to explain these particulars as I am aware applications will be made to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for their discharge.

In consequence of Captain Tremlett's letter of the 21st June transmitted to you, stating that there is at least 300 seamen in Bath, I have made every enquiry in my power relative to it, and tho' I cannot find that there is any foundation for a report to such an extent, I have reason to believe that there are several labouring Men who have been at sea, and that the better kind of seamen who came home in the Bristol ships are kept in Bath to be out of the way of the press of this City. Therefore if their Lordships will approve of my sending a Lieutenant over with his Gang, I have no doubt but some men might be procured.

[Adm 1/1528 B 41]

383. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 11 July 1803

Bristol 11 July 1803

I beg you will state to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I sent Lieutenant Graves to Bath for the purpose of obtaining the Seamen said to be there, and tho' the Mayor and several Magistrates came forward in the most handsome manner to give their support, together with the constables and the watchmen of the City, they were not able to oppose the mob that were assembled to resist them. It was therefore thought advisable to stop the business for the present, and that in recalling the gang, the seamen might return to their Labour, when the Mayor intends to take them up on suspicion of various misdemeanours

that have been committed, by which means, they may probably be secured for the service.

[Adm 1/1528 B42]

384. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 28 July 1803

Bristol 28 July 1803

I beg to acquaint the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the party I sent to Ilchester agreeable to their Lordships directions on the 23rd July for the four men who have received his Majestie's Pardon, have been attacked near Shepton Mallet by a number of Men with Sticks and Knives, who have beat and cut them (the press gang) in a very cruel manner. They have however executed the service they were sent on, and are very orderly, good men and deserving their Lordships protection. Warrants were immediately issued against six of the principal offenders and Charles Bissin, who appears to have been the ringleader, was taken up and brought over by the Gang, but having lost the fore-finger of his left hand, is not fit for his Majestie's Service. I shall however detain him until I know their Lordships determination respecting him. William Biggin, brother to the man before mentioned and not yet taken, is a Pentioner of the Chest of Chatham.

Marginalia: 29 August 1803, acquaint him that he is to retain the men he has in custody for His Majestie's Service, and inform him that the pension of the brother will be stopped

[Adm 1/1528 B43]

385. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 12 August 1803

Bristol August 12th 1803.

Sir, In answer to your letter of yesterday's date directing me to report upon the two men named in the Margin[Thomas Jones and Cato Martin] I beg to acquaint you that Thos. Jones produced to me a certificate of his being an American, but as he is married to a Woman of this place who is settled here, with two children by him, I prest him and sent him to the Fleet, at which time he was working upon the Quay as a Porter. Cato Martin is a black Man, pressed out of the *Dolly* West Indiaman. He called himself an American but could not bring me any proof of it. The Protection he produced was made out for a White Man...I have the honour to be, &c George Barker.

Margin: 13 August,[Re Jones] Being married & settled in England their Lordships cannot allow of his discharge.[Re Martin] Having no documents to prove[being American] & having produced one belonging to a person of a different description, their Lordships cannot allow of his discharge.

[Adm 1/1548 B44]

386. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, August 1803

Bristol Aug 1803

I beg to acquaint you that George Whitfield, who appears to be about fifteen years of age, was discharged this day from the *Amy* tender, agreeable to their Lordships' directions of 28th July.

Enclosure: 26 Sept 1803, Barnstaple
Honoured Sir,

I have to request your Honour will be pleased to move the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in behalf of my son George Whitefield, aged 14 ½ years, who is an Apprentice to myself, who am a Master Taylor at Barnstaple in the County of Devon. He ran away from me the 30th of August, & entered with the Press Gang here, & was immediately sent on board the *Amy* Tender in King Road. His loss to me is a very serious one, having a large Family to maintain. I have therefore humbly to hope their Lordships will have the goodness to order him to be discharged, & I shall in duty bound ever pray for their Lordships, being with all due respect their Lordships humble Servant, James Whitefield.

I do certifye the above to be true and have examined the Indenture which is dated the 26th August 1802. William Servant, Mayor of Barnstaple.

[Adm 1/1548 B45]

387. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 7 October 1803

7 October 1803

I beg you will acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have impressed the two men named in the margin hereof [T. P. Sedgwick and Henry Tripp] who are boatswains of the West India ships fitting in this Port.

Captain Sotheby has claimed those men as belonging to the Sea Fencibles under his command, but I have refused to give them up, conceiving that their Lordships do not mean to exempt men of their description from the Press, who have only enrolled themselves till their Ships are ready for sea.²⁰

I have reason to think there are several Men enrolled in the Fencibles under Captain Sotheby who belong to the West India ships, and are not married, but have enrolled themselves in the Fencibles till their ships are ready for sea.

Enclosure: Bristol 6 October 1803

I beg leave to acquaint you that Henry Tripp who enrolled himself in the Sea Fencibles under my command on the 19th September being an Inhabitant of this place with a Wife & 2 children, and receiving my Protection as being inrolled, was yesterday impressed and refused to be delivered up by Capt. Barton [Barker], and Thomas Sedgwick, an Inhabitant with a Wife and one child was likewise impressed

²⁰ On the recruiting problems posed by the Sea Fencibles, see Nicholas Rogers, "The Sea Fencibles, Loyatism, and the Reach of the State," in *Resisting Napoleon. The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797–1815*, ed. Mark Philip (Aldershot. 2006), 41–60.

the Day before, but I must observe that the reason given by Capt. Barton[Barker] for keeping them is that they now belong to West India Ships and he conceives that they do not answer to the Men described in the 1st article of the 2nd Instruction[regarding Sea Fencibles]. I beg to acquaint your Lordships' instructions in this Head and that if they are proper men to be enrolled[in the Fencibles] that they will give instructions for their being discharged[from the navy].

I have the honour of being their Lordships' obedient humble servant, Thomas Sotheby.

Marginalia to Barker: approve of his having detained them under the circumstances he states. Acquaint Capt. Sotheby that these men not coming within the description of persons intended by their Lordships' Instructions to be enrolled as Sea Fencibles, their Lordships approve of Capt. Barker's having impressed them

[Adm 1/1548 B47]

388. Captain Edward Barker to William Marsden, 9 October 1803

Bristol 9 October 1803

John Griffith, the apprentice to Mr. Baillie, is just returned from the West Indies, and as he has only one month of his time to serve, I have refused his discharge, believing he could never go to sea in Mr. Baillie's employ during the remainder of his apprenticeship as the ship to which he belongs will not be ready. He was impressed by Captain Simmonds of the *Tourterelli* and sent on board the *Amy*[tender] now sailed for Plymouth.

Enclosure: from Evan Baillie

Bristol 2 October 1803

I am now under the necessity of troubling you with the enclosed Indentures and to request that you will move to Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to order the immediate discharge of my apprentice John Griffith from the *Amy* Tender now lying in Kingroad. He is clearly not liable to be impressed on account of his indentures and his being under the age of 18 years. The Indentures you will have the goodness to return to me.

I remain, most respectfully, Sir &c

[Adm 1/1528 B48]

389. Captain Edward Barker to William Marsden, 9 October 1803

Bristol Oct 9th, 1803

Lieutenant Fleming, who arrived here on the 6th October in the *United Brothers* Tender from Ilfracombe, left Swansea on the 27th September with orders from Captain New to proceed immediately to Bristol, but as I have reason to think from the state of the weather and the number of arrivals from the westward since he left

Swansea, that he has put into Ilfracombe to accommodate the late master of the *United Brothers* who lives in the neighbourhood of it, and has left her in consequence of being ordered upon this station, I think it my duty to represent the same to you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Margin: 10 Oct. Direct him to call upon Lieutenant Fleming for his Journal & report whether it appears that he unnecessarily put into Ilfracombe: & in all cases to examine the Journals of the Commanders of the Tenders & make this report when any improper delay appears.

Enclosure: Swansea Oct 2nd 1803

Dear Sir,

I was very much surprised on the receipt of your letter this morning to find the *United Brothers* had not join you. She sailed from hence on the 25th Sept with orders to proceed to Bristol without a moment's loss of time, & then to put herself under your directions. It does not strike me there has been any weather to prevent her arriving. If she is at Ilfracombe, I fear it must be private business of the Masters who live in the Neighbourhood & I hope they will be able to account satisfactorily for their neglect. Should I pass through Bristol I will do myself the pleasure of waiting on you, & hope opportunity will at some point offer to return your civilities.

I am, Sir, your very obedient servant, Thomas New.

[Adm 1/1528 B49]

390. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 13 October 1803

Bristol, 13 October 1803

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have examined the Log Book of the *United Brothers* Tender by which it appears that it blew fresh from the Eastward when they put into Ilfracombe.

Lieutenant Fleming's letter, which accompanied his log book, appears so very disrespectful that I request you will lay it before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Enclosure from Lieutenant Fleming

Sir,

Agreeable to your Order I by the bearer of this Hand give you the Ship's log book and should my conduct in this case escape censure I think in justice to myself I may beg to know whether after a man is put on board here I am to return him dead or alive for ware[were] it not to prevent the New Raised men from Smathiring[Smothering?] & Drowning I never should have sought Ilfracombe.

[Adm 1/1528 B50]

391. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, early November 1803

In answer to your letter of yesterday's date respecting John Morgan mate of the sloop *Perseverance*, I beg to acquaint you that no such person appears on the books at this Rendezvous, I therefore conclude he was impressed by the officers of the *Boadicea* who acted with me on a General impress on the 9th of May last, when those taken afloat were regulated by Captain Maitland.

In answer to your letter of the 31st Ultimo., respecting Lieutenant Fleming, I beg you will inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that by letters I have lately received from Lieutenant Fleming, I believe he is excessively sorry for his error, and that it is more to be attributed to his ignorance than any intention to offend.

[Adm 1/1528 B51]

392. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 28 November 1803

Bristol 28 November 1803

I beg leave to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that two impressed seamen have made their escape from the *United Brothers* Tender in a shore boat on the 26th Inst[November] and I am sorry to say that I have so many occasions to complain of Lieutenant Fleming's negligence, particularly now in returning from Plymouth so short of provisions and water, that I cannot send him to sea for want of it, that I am under the necessity of reporting it.

[Adm 1/1528 B53]

393. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 30 November 1803

Bristol, 30 Nov. 1803

I beg to state to you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that John Daniels was working as a rigger when impressed, and I am informed from good authority that he came home in the summer fleet from the West Indies.

Enclosure:

Sir,

I beg to acquaint you that John Daniels who had enrolled himself as a Sea Fencible under my Command was on the 23rd (November) impressed by Capt. Barker. Daniels was discharged from *L'Entrepreneur* but since December last has been working at his employ as a Shoemaker with his Father in Law in this City where he is settled, married and has had children and his Wife now far gone with child. His enrolment was soon after I came down here, He has been constant in his attendance and forward in his exercise and I am to request that their Lordships will send down on order for his discharge. I beg to observe that I am apprehensive if he is kept, that most of the Sea Fencibles will be fearful of giving their attendance. I

have the honour to be, &c. Thomas Sotheby[Commander of the Sea Fencibles in Bristol]

[Adm 1/1528 B54]

394. Captain George Barker to Evan Nepean, 13 January 1804

Bristol, Jan 13th, 1804

Sir,

I beg you will acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I cannot find any Lieutenant residing in this Neighbourhood to supersede Lieutenant Fleming in the command of the *United Brothers* Tender, as directed in your letter of the 14th December, but if their Lordships have no objection, to remove Lieutenant John Forbes from the *Magnanime*. He appears to me a very proper officer for the situation.

[Adm 1/1531 B 62 & 65]

395. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 2 February 1804

Bristol, February 2nd 1804

In consequence of Sir Evan Nepean's Letter of the 14th January, I sent to Cranham for Edmund Maddox, a seaman therein mentioned. The Midshipman applied to Mr. Thomas Mee of Gloucester, a Magistrate for the district of Cranham for assistance, which he refused, alledging he had no authority to act in such cases. The Man made his escape as soon as the Midshipman appeared on the premises. I have therefore returned the inclosure in case these Lordships should think proper to take further action.

Enclosure:

Right Honourable Gentlemen,

These are to inform you that there is Concealed at Cranham in the County of Gloucestershire a stout active Saylor about five feet 4 or five Inches height. He was on board one of his Majesty's Frigates in the year 1801 at Plymouth and has been in Oxfordshire & Cranham ever Since. He was on board the Frigate two years and he was on board a Merchant ship before 3 years longer. His name is Edmund Maddox & he wears a short Dark Velvet Jacket and Leather Breeches and is to be seen every day in the week at the Pottery aforesaid. He is about 23 or 24 years of age, he is protected under a Smuggling excuse of his being enrol'd in the Volunteers from being Drawn in[to] the Militia but never attended, neither does he understand one motion of Millitary Discipline. It is a little attorney that pretends to be his Friend. Maddox says that he understands navigation, which I believe he does. Should you mention who gave you this information I should have some private injury done me, as he is Connected in a Gang of Malicious People.

I am, &c Benjamin Petty

[Adm 1/1531 B64]

396. Duchess of Gordon to Sir Philip Stevenson, March 1804

The Duchess of Gordon presents her compliments to Sir Philip Stevenson and begs a protection for a young man who had been impress in Bristol and put on board the vessel *United Brothers*. James Whitefoot is a timid unformed young man of respectable parents, bred a glover and was passing to follow in this business. He never saw a ship before and is the comfort & support of his parents. The Duchess hopes Sir Philip will forgive the liberty she takes but she is interested in this young man's happiness.

Margin: Barker was ordered to state the case.

[Adm 1/1531 (George Barker) B65b enclosure]

397. William Bannister to Captain George Barker, 21 March 1804

Worcester 21 March 1804

I am requested by the Mayor and Justices of this City to acquaint you that they have now in the Gaol...a very suspicious person by the name of Robert Davis... suspected of being a Deserter from the Navy or Army. That he declines giving any direct answer to a question But to him with perception only, that he has been in the Navy for some considerable timer. He is a stout athletic man about 20 years of age, blue jacket, striped waistcoat and blue trowsers – perfectly sound and fit for service. If you think this man worth the trouble for your entering he will be detained till the receipt of your answer.

I am, Sir, &c, William Bannister, of the mayor's office.

[Adm 1/1531 B66 enclosure]

398. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 6 April 1804

6 April 1804

George Barker sent Benjamin Tucker Esq of the Admiralty a list of the number of shipwrights and caulkers employed in the merchant yards of the City

Yard	Shipwrights				Caulkers			
	About 50yrs	under 50	App	Total	Above 50yrs	under 50	App	Total
Wm Hillhouse	7	29	44	80				
Wm Teast	10	26	28	64	2	1		3
James, Brice	8	22	27	57				
Houghton	1	6	3	10				
Phillips	1	1	2					

NB all of the above shipwrights are caulkers.

[Adm 1/1531 B67]

399. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 22 July 1804

Bristol, July 22nd 1804

I enclose you a letter I have received from Captain Blake commanding the Sea Fencibles at Gloucester, and request to know if their Lordships will allow me to send for the Men therein mentioned.

Enclosure:

Gloucester 21 July 1804

By virtue of my Press Warrant and at the instigation of the Mayor and Magistrates of this City, I have impressed a Man by the name of John Hopkins, who is a very good Sea man, and last war belonged to the Foretop of His Majestie's Ship the *Queen*, and will be an acquisition in times like these to His Majestie's Service. As I have no means of forwarding him to you, I shall be very glad if you will give directions to some of the People employed under your Command to come to Gloucester and receive him. I have paid him one shilling prest money, and will subsist him until I hear from you.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c Captain George Blake

[Adm 1/1531 B71]

400. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 28 July 1804

28 July 1804

In reply to your letter of the 26th July directing me to state the case of Wm Mayne on board the *Amy Tender*, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed at Swansea and sent here for a passage to Plymouth and that I cannot give you any further information respecting him that is already stated in his Petition returned herewith.

Enclosure

To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners for executing the office of the Lord High Admiral of England

The Humble Petition of William Mayne, late mate of the Brig *Henry of Hoyle* within the Port of St Ives in the County of Cornwall, whereof William Gluyas then was & still is Master & employed in the Coal and Copper ore Trade.

Sheweth that your Petitioner while on board the said brig *Henry* lying at Swansea & doing his Duty as Mate thereof was lately impressed by men under the orders of William New Esquire, Captain of the impress service at that Port in consequence of information having been given him by Captain Thomas Tremearne, part owner and late Master of the Brig *Brothers* of St Ives, That he (your Petitioner) had misbehaved

himself while serving as a seaman on board the said Brig *Brothers* then under Tremearne's command.

That the information so given by the said Thomas Tremearne to the said Captain New was wholly groundless & arose merely from Malice & wicked resentment...

The Brig *Brothers* being laden with a Cargo of Pilchards at St Ives & bound to some port in the Mediterranean & being in want of hands to enable her to proceed on her voyage, your Petitioner & the said Edward Noall (among other persons) in or about the Middle of October 1802 engaged themselves to serve as Seamen on the said Brig during her said voyage & until her Return to a port in England & signed Articles accordingly.

That the Brig having discharged her cargo of fish in the Mediterranean & shipped a fresh Cargo of other Merchandize for Liverpool arrived there in or about the Month of June 1803 at which time there was a very hot impress for men & your petitioner, who has a wife & two children to support, & the said Edward Noall, fearing they shou'd be taken, went to the Captain (Tremearne) thereon, when he assured them of his friendship & told them to act as they thought best for safety. That soon after an opportunity offered of protecting themselves & going to their homes in a vessel then about to sail to St Ives & the Captain. Who expressedly approved to advance them some money to defray some necessary charges.

That on the arrival of the brig *Brothers* at St Ives, your petitioner and the said Edward Noall applied to Captain Tremearne to settle for their Wages, which he said he would do at another time. They applied again when he refused to pay them pretending that they had forfeited their Wages by deserting the vessel at Liverpool altho' in truth he had expressly approved & assisted them in their leaving her but he at the time upon proposing the Question, admitted he had nothing else to object against them for that they had otherwise done their duty in every respect to his satisfaction.

That your petitioner and the said Edward Noall were obliged to employ an attorney to prosecute Captain Tremearne for their wages thereby recovered them & upon this occasion the Captain had frequently declared that he would be avenged against them for prosecuting him.

That your petitioner, when impressed, was put onto the *Cleveland* Tender then at Swansea & was afterwards taken (where he at that time is) on board the *Amy* Tender now lying at Bristol.

That your Petitioner was long before and at the time of being impressed the real & true Mate of the aforesaid Brig *Henry* & had always been & then was regularly protected as such & that upon being impressed his Captain, the aforementioned William Gluyas, applied for his Release which Capt New refused, alledging he had received Information from Captain Tremearne of your Petitioner having misbehaved on board the Brig *Brothers*.

That your Petitioner can produce the most satisfactory proof of the falsehood and malice of the aforesaid Captain Tremearne & Information of his own good Character & Conduct from his earliest youth to the present time. Wherefore Consideration of the oppressive and revengeful Conduct of the before named Captain Tremearne for the Reason before stated and inasmuch as your Petitioner was at the time of being impressed the Mate of the aforesaid Brig *Henry*, & duly protected as such. Your Petitioner humbly hopes your Lordships will be pleased to give Directions to the Captain of the aforesaid Tender the *Amy* or other the proper officer to set your Petitioner at liberty to enable him to return to his Charge as Mate of the Brig

Henry aforesaid or that your Lordships will make such other order in behalf of your Petitioner as to your Lordships shall seem meet & the Circumstances of his hard Case may require.

And your Petitioner shall ever pray &c

William Mayne, on board the *Amy* Tender at Bristol July 1804.

2nd Enclosure: from St Ives, Cornwall, 22 July 1804, James Halse, Lt Col commander of regiment St Ives.

The Friends of William Mayne who are People of some Respect in this Neighbourhood have requested me to forward his Petition enclosed to the Admiralty and I most willingly do so in behalf of an Oppressed Man. I have know the Man (the Petitioner) for many years for he served his apprenticeship in a Vessel belonging to me and I have ever had occasion to consider him a very honest obedient & faithful servant, and it is also within my own knowledge that among the circumstances stated in his Petition as to the Conduct of Captain Tremearne are strictly true and I verily believe that he has in every respect justly represented himself in this Case. I beg your excuse for troubling you upon this occasion & have the Honour to be,

[Adm 1/1531 B72]

401. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 1 August 1804

The letter, dated, 1 Aug 1804, concerned Richard Gem, aged 20 yrs, who entered as a landsman 5 July and was sent on board the *Amy* tender.

Enclosure

My apprentice Richard Gem, having absconded my service and entered as a Volunteer in his Majesties Navy, I obtained the enclosed warrant for his apprehension but on application being made at Bristol for his release, the regulating Captain (Barker) said he could not release him without an order from the Admiralty as the lad's name had been returned there. I am therefore to request you will have the goodness to obtain an order from the Board for his discharge and transmit the same to me or Captain Barker in the normal course.

If I am anyways irregular in making application directly to you I hope you will excuse it as I am unaccustomed with these matters. I am, Sir, &c

Benjamin Hodson, glove manufacturer, Worcester, 29 July 1804.

[Adm 1/1531 B73]

402. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 12 August 1804

12 Aug 1804

George Westlake, late carpenter of a West Indiaman, impressed by Lieut. Young, has been rescued from the *Rendezvous* by a large body of shipwrights belonging to the Merchants' Yards of this Place. The Carpenters of the ships in general from this port belong to the Merchants' Yards. They are discharged from the Ships the day

of their arrival and return again to the duty in the Yard. I have therefore considered them as liable to be impressed as any other Men, and have taken them where I have sufficient proof of their having been at sea. I can identify the Person of any individual concerned in this riotous proceeding but from the Numbers I am inclined to believe the whole of the ship were present, particularly as they have threatened to rescue there[their] men if they where[were] impressed. I beg their Lordships' directions how I man to act with those men.

Margin: 13 August Acquaint him that he ought to have applied to the civil magistrates for assistance in an outrage of this nature.

[Adm 1/1531 B74]

403. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 18 August 1804

Bristol, 18th August 1804

In reply to your letter of yesterday's date directing me to report upon James Robins, a sawyer impressed here, I beg to acquaint you that he was Impressed from one of the West Indiamen lately arrived and that he has been more than six years at sea, and that no person has been received as a substitute for him.

Enclosure: Bristol, 15 August 1804

James Robins, a landsman, his occupation that of a sawyer in one of the Carpenters' yards in this City, has been impress'd into his Majesty's Service by Lieut. Thorpe commanding a tender in Kingroad. His friends have procured an able bodied seaman to serve in his place, who has been accepted. They are informed, however, that this Officer possesses no power to liberate this young man without an order from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. To that effect, my object therefore in troubling you with this letter is to request that deeming this an occasion in which my application may properly be attended with success, you will transmit the necessary order to Lieut. Thorpe for the young man's liberation.

I have the honour to be, your most obedient humble servant, Evans Baillie.

[Adm 1/1531 B 75]

404. Captain Barker to William Marsden, 28 August 1804

Enclosure: 25 August 1804.

I am sorry to be under the necessity of troubling you with a letter on the present occasion which is to state to you that John Eames, second mate of the ship *Zephyr* belonging to me, lately arrived from Jamaica, was yesterday impressed into his Majesty's Service, he being then employed on board the Ship to discharge her Cargo, the Chief Mate being Sick and unable to discharge the Cargo, an application has been made to Captain Barker, the regulating officer of this Port, for his discharge. But he did not think proper to grant it & recommended an application to the Admiralty Board. I therefore request the favour you will please[to] state this Case to the Lords

Commissioners of the Admiralty & that I humbly Solicit they will be pleased to give an order for his discharge.

The said John Eames is an honest industrious Man with a Wife & Family entirely dependent on him for their support. I have further to request, in case their lordships should not think proper to grant that said John Eames his discharge on the above just representation, that they will allow him to find a substitute if he can procure amongst his friends as much money as will be necessary for the purpose and in that event to grant him a protection during the war. I beg the favour of an early answer & will oblige Sir,

Your most obedt. & very humble Servant, Charles Payne.

Margin: Cannot be discharged, but later the Admiralty agreed.

[Adm 1/1531 B77]

405. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 1 September 1804

Bristol Sept 1st 1804,

Sir,

John Adams entered voluntarily at the Rendezvous on the 23rd Inst. as Landsman. He was sober at the time, and showed no unwillingness to remain, when his companions were refused on account of Rupture. He is a very fine young man, 24 years of age.

Enclosure: Bristol, August 28th, 1804.

Honoured Sirs,

With all humility I submit my Case for your Honours' Consideration on Thursday Last, My Husband John Adams, by trade a Tyler and Plaisterer, being with some of his Shop Mates in a State of Intoxication, he was prevailed on to enter himself on Board the Tender now lying in Kingroad, and I having no other means of support for myself & two children, and Pregnant with another by my husband's labour, and he is entirely unacquainted with the seas, I pray the Honourable the Lords of the Admiralty will be Pleased to take my very hard case into consideration and restore my husband, John Adams, to his disconsolate Family & your Petitioner will as in Duty bound ever pray &c Martha Adams

NB Thomas Castle, Esquire of this City can Vouch for the Truth of my Statement

Margin 3 Sept 1804, having voluntarily entered he cannot be discharged

[Adm 1/1531 B 78]

406. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 23 September 1804

Bristol, 23 Sept 1804

In consequence of your letter of 20th inst. directing the discharge of John Eames, 2nd mate of the *Zephyr*, I sent Lieut. Turner of the *Amy Tender* an order for that purpose with directions to send him to me for his certificate. I inclose you Lieut. Turner's Letter refusing to comply with the order, which I am convinced proceeds more from disrespect to me than any punctuality in the observance of his instructions. I have had frequent occasions to reprove this Officer for his negligence of duty, and disobedience to my orders. It is reported to me that he was drunk when he wrote the inclosure, which is not the only instance I know of his being so. I therefore request you will lay his Letter by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Enclosure from Lt. Turner, Hungroad, 23 Sept 1804 saying he had received Barker's order to release John Eames, but said he could not discharge any man from the tender unless the admiralty actually endorsed it.

Margin to reprimand Lt Turner in the strongest terms and direct him in future to be attentive to the orders of Captain Barker.

[Adm 1/1531 B80]

407. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 26 September 1804

Bristol, 26 Sept 1804

Charles Coulson, a shipwright belonging to Mr Teaste's yard at this port, came home in the last fleet carpenter of the *Westbury*, and was impressed after being discharged from her on the 8th September and rescued immediately by the shipwrights belonging to the different yards. He was impressed again on the 14th instant and by sending him down in a coach with a military guard, he was put on board the *Amy Tender* where he still remains.

Enclosure: Charles Coulson belonging to our Ship the *Westbury*, Capt. Sime [Simmie?], now in this port, having been impressed, his friends having applied to Captain Ba[r]ker, the regulating officer here, & offered to find an able Seaman in his Room, are informed by him that as he is sent on Board a Vessel in our River, & his name returned to the Admiralty, he cannot be liberated without an order from you. He would therefore feel himself under great obligations if said Request could be granted. We remain, with due respect,

Your assured friends, Edward Kidd & Company.

[Adm 1/1531 B81]

408. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 26 September 1804

Bristol, 26 Sept 1804

Upon inquiry from the Admiralty, Barker said Wm Haynes entered at the rendezvous in the name of Richard Smith on 4 Sept and was now aboard the *Amy Tender* in Kingroad.

Enclosure: Bristol, 21 Sept 1804

My Lords,

I beg leave to trouble you with the inclosed Indenture of apprenticeship and to request the favor of you to order the apprentice William Haynes to be restored to his Master. I understand he entered the Marine Service about a fortnight or three weeks since and is now on board the Tender lying in Kingroad near this place.

The poor man, the Master, is afflicted with deafness and has a large family to support, to which this Boy's assistance materially contributed; and I therefore hope you will be pleased to order him to be delivered up immediately, as should the Tender sail before the order arrives, it would occasion considerable delay and some expense which the Master is unable to bear, and I therefore presume nothing will be required to be paid by him on the apprentice being given up, but if so, he must endeavor to raise it amongst his Friends.

I am, with respect, Your Lordships' most obedient servant, W. H. Byam

[Adm 1/1531 B83]

409. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 13 October 1804

Bristol, 13 October 1804. Barker reported that "Thomas Cornish was impressed by me, and is a good seamen and stout young man. I have no reason to believe he has either wife or child, and from his violence to the Press Gang a few months since, I do not consider him entitled to their Lordships' Indulgence."

Enclosure: Bristol October 10th, 1804

Honoured Sir,

I hope your goodness will pardon my freedom in informing you I am a labouring man, have been two voyages to sea in the capacity of cook, have a wife in a very bad state of health and two small children, as Captain Barker can certify. But being impressed and now on board the tender hope your goodness will take this cause into your consideration and give him his Liberty as he has got a person in his stead[stead] who has served his regular time to the seas and a person approved by the regulating captain. A line by Return of post will be duly attended to by,

Sir, your distressed and most obedient servant, Thomas Cornish,

At John Palmer's, opposite the Fountain in the Pithay, Bristol.

Margin: cannot be discharged

[Adm 1/1531 B85]

410. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 14 October 1804

Bristol, 14th Oct 1804.

The Friends of Thomas Foot (who I am directed by your letter of the 6th October to discharge upon two Landmen being produced to serve as substitutes) have brought an able seaman in lieu of two Landmen, not being able to procure them.

I beg to know whether their Lordships will approve of my taking this Man in preference.

Margin: acquaint him that two must be given in lieu of a seaman or landsman.

[Adm 1/1531 B86]

411. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 26 October 1804

Bristol, 26 Oct 1804.

Isaac Legge, belonging to the Sea Fencibles in his District, was impressed by[at] Captain Sotheby's request for non-attendance, and now sail'd for Plymouth in the *Amy Tender*. He is not a seaman. Mr Harman offered two Landmen in his room, who are to be found by the parish, if their Lordships are pleased to shew the Indulgence.

Enclosure: Bristol October 23rd 1804[to William Marsden, Esquire, Secretary to the Admiralty]

Sir, I take the Liberty of addressing you on behalf of Isaac Legge, who was impressed Saturday last at this Place. I understand he was a volunteer in the Sea Fencibles here but owing to the Employ he was in, which was that of a Bargeman in a Trow trading from Bristol to Bath, he could not attend the Parades, and by Information given to his Captain on account of his non attendance, he was impressed. He never has been at sea and has a wife and two small children, one of which is now at the Breast, who are supported by his Labor & Industry. If by providing a Substitute or according to other Regulations of the Honorable Board you could get him a discharge, you will confer a lasting obligation upon his poor disconsolate wife & children. I shall consider myself enormously oblig'd by the favour of a reply. I am Sir, &c William Hasmar

Margin: 27 Oct order his discharge procuring two substitutes.

[Adm 1/1531 B88]

412. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 4 November 1804

Bristol, 4 Nov 1804.

John Green is an able seaman about 40 years of age. He told me when he was impressed that he had a Wife and four children in Ireland, which I have reason to believe[is true]. He is now on board the *United Brothers* Tender at this Port.

Enclosure. Bristol, Nov. 1st 1804

Sir, John Green 45 being impressed on Friday last being a Seaman, having a wife and five[sic] children who entirely depend on him for support, is willing to get two Landsmen in his Room if you, Sir, would be so good as to make it known to the Lords of the Admiralty.

And am, Sir, waiting your answer, Your most humble servant, Randall McClennan.

Please address Sign of St Andrew Cross, Currant Lane, New Princess Street.

Margin: could be discharged upon producing an ordinary seaman and a landsman.

[Adm 1/1531 B90]

413. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 5 November 1804

Bristol, 5 Nov 1804.

Lieutenant Forbes commanding the *United Brothers* Tender, informs me that James Hudson is 21 years of age, has been nine years at sea, and has the appearance of being a good seaman.

When impressed, he belonged to one of the outward bound West Indian ships, but was on shore at the time. He says he has a wife and two children at Whitehaven.

Margin: 6 Nov, on producing two ordinary seamen he might be discharged.

[Adm 1/1531 B91]

414. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 13 November 1804

Bristol 13 November 1804

Enclosure: to the Lords Commissioners of his Majesties Admiralty
The Petition of James Hudson, most humble sheweth That your petitioner was impressed on the twenty-seventh day of last Month into His Majesties Service on Board the *United Brothers* Tender now moored in the river near this City. Your petitioner having a wife and three small children, he begs to submit if by procuring two Able Landsmen in his room his discharge may be granted...On being so indulged our Petitioner will have cause and in duty bound, ...

Margin: could be discharged upon producing two landsmen and one ordinary seaman. They were produced by 23 Dec 1804.

[Adm 1/1531 B92, B103]

415. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 10 November 1804

Bristol, 10 Nov 1804.

James Thompson served as gunner's mate on board the *Edgar* in the last war, and says he was invalided from her for a hurt he received by a fall from the Main Yard, and that he has his Invalid's Ticket. Two of his ribs appear to have been broken, but the surgeon is of opinion that he is still an able man. He has a wife and two small children in this City.

Enclosure: *United Brothers* Tender, Kingroad, Bristol, 10 November 1804, to William Marsden Esquire.

Sir, Being impressed at Bristol and having a Wife & Family, I am to request you will be pleased to intreat their Lordships to Indulge me with the favour of my discharge on condition of my finding two able bodied Landsmen to serve in my Stead.

[Adm 1/1531 B 92a]

416. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 13 November 1804

Bristol, November 13th 1804.

Robert Hawkins was impressed from one of the Severn Trows. I have no reason to think that he has ever been at sea. His Mother appears an aged woman, and much distressed, being entirely supported by him.

Enclosure:

Sir, I should be highly honored by your laying before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of Robert Hawkins, who was impressed on the second of November & is now on Board the *Brothers* lying in Hungroad in this City...The said Robert Hawkins was never in any ship whatsoever, but maintained an aged mother & himself by plying in a Boat upon the River. The friends of his mother are willing to subscribe a sum sufficient to secure a landsmen in lieu of Hawkins, which they sincerely hope the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty will accept as Hawkins cannot be considered a great acquisition to the navy than a young Heathfull Man of that description. Your answer will greatly oblige your most obedient & humble servant,

John Stibbs, at the White Hart, Old Market, Bristol, 8 November 1804.

Margin: ordered to be discharged.

[Adm 1/1531 B 93]

417. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 22 November 1804

Bristol, November 22nd, 1804

Sir, I have reason to believe that the owners of the *Ann* intend Richard Case to become chief mate at present. Immediately upon the arrival of that ship, a Person was sent on board as chief mate, and was on his duty as such, when Case was impress'd; nor was there any objection to the contrary stated by him.

Enclosure: Bristol, 9 November 1804

The Humble Petition of Richard Case, Mariner.

Sheweth that your Petitioner went on last year as second mate of the ship *Ann* of this Port, bound to Jamaica.

That the Captain of the said ship dying on the Homeward Passage, your petitioner by seniority became chief mate, in which capacity he took upon himself all responsibility attached to the situation of chief mate.

Your petitioner was impressed on the 8th Instant into His Majestie's Service but contrary to the common practice, which exempts persons in your petitioner's situation.

Your petitioner therefore humbly prays your Lordships will take his case into consideration, and grant him an order for his Release that he may be enabled to resume his former station and employment.

Your petitioner, rather than lose his prospect of advancement in Life is willing to procure a proper Person in his stead, should such be your Lordships' pleasure although it will prove a heavy expense to him which he can ill afford. Your petitioner is in duty bound, will ever pray &, Richard Case.

Margin: could only to be discharged if he provided sufficient proof of his status.

[Adm 1/1531 B94]

418. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 15 December 1804

Bristol, 15 Dec 1804

I cannot find words sufficient to express my indignation at the anonymous letter herewith return'd, but I feel an inward and secret satisfaction in being able to assert that it is the most malicious and infamous falsehood throughout. As to withholding information money from the men, I declare that no Man has ever been impressed by information from any man belonging to Lieutenant Williams' gang, and three only by Lieutenant Smith's, who are paid for, and the vouchers for two of them were sent to the Navy Board with my disbursements for last month, the other for a seaman impressed the 8th instant I have now by me, The charge of having received presents for discharging men is equally base and false. On the contrary, being aware of the numerous applications of this sort that might be made when I first enter'd upon this service, I refused every invitation to the public dinners given there (except the Mayor) and have always declined visiting the West India Merchants, and Mercantile People, that I might be the more free to refuse. In justice to Lieutenant Smith, I think it my duty to say that I have seen nothing in him but the manners of a Gentleman, perfect sobriety, and very particular attention to his duty. I have no doubt of being able to name the author of the inclosure, but as he has promised to communicate to you some future time, I would rather defer it at present in hopes of being able to bring it more to light[?], when I trust their Lordships will give me an opportunity of justifying myself against so foul a charge by a public investigation.

[Adm 1/1531 B 101]

419. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 22 December 1804

Bristol, 22 Dec 1804

Sir,

Charles Harris, 2nd mate of the *Trelawney*, was impressed on board this ship in the River, but she is not cleared out from the Custom House. He is a very respectable young man, eighteen years of age, and has been near four years at sea.

*Enclosure: letter from Edward Prothero, Mayor of Bristol, 20 Dec. 1804
Prothero reported that "a young man of the name of Charles Harris, second mate of the ship *Trelawney* bound to the West Indies, was yesterday impressed from that ship as she was going down the river to Kingroad. He is the son of Mr. Francis Harris and grandson of the late worthy Alderman Harris of this City. The respectability of his connexions and their great distress on this occasion induce me to interest myself on his behalf and to request that their Lordships will have the goodness to grant his discharge it is can be done consistently with the rules of the service."

Margin: two able bodied substitutes needed for discharge.

[Adm 1/1531 B 102]

420. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 28 December 1804

Bristol, 28 Dec 1804.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 27th instant directing the case of William Hemmings to be stated, I beg to acquaint you that He was impressed by an information of his having been at sea. I understand that he has been[on] two voyages to the West Indies about five years since, as a Baker on board a ship out of this port.

Enclosure: To the Secretary of the Admiralty
Respected Friend,

On the 24th instant the officer and men in the Impress Service in this City came to my house and took away a servant of mine named William Hemmings, a young man about 24 years of age, who has worked for me as a Journeyman Baker for nearly 12 Months past, and as he is married and a housekeeper, paying rent and taxes and appears to be a sober honest man, and although he has been at sea, I understand they deem him nothing more than a landsman which may justify the officer who imprest him, but I find he knows very little of sea affairs having been but a short time at sea, and that when he was a lad.

If the Gentlemen under whom thou acted were to know the hardship of this young Man's case, I think humanity would induce them to release him, particularly as he is an industrious sober men and can be of no great service in a King's ship. I shall be much at a loss without him, as journeymen in our line of business are very scarce, which is one inducement to me to state these reasons to thee, hoping thy Humanity with that of the Board of Admiralty will take the case into consideration as to order his release. Thy reply adress'd to me will much bilge[oblige] thy assured Friend.

Jeffery Wallis. Bristol, 12th month[December] 26th, 1804.

Please direct to Jeffrey Wallis, Baker, Horsefair, Bristol.

Margin: Wm Hemmings to be discharged.

[Adm 1/1531 B104]

421. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 30 December 1804

Bristol, 30th Dec 1804.

Sir, The two apprentices[Geo Cavil and John Taylor] named in the inclosed indentures have been to sea before they were bound to Mr. Baker, which was confessed by themselves, and acknowledged by Captain White when he claimed their discharge. They are very fine Lads, eighteen years of age.

Enclosure: I am requested to make application to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for the discharge of George Cavil and John Taylor, t[w]o apprentices bound by the Enclosed Indentures to Mr Benjamin Baker of Princes Street, Rotherhithe, who deserted his service a short time since from his ship *George*, Captain White, and entered on board HM Tender lying in Bristol, and as no servant that is bound an apprentice can quit his master's service without his leave, and it has always been the custom of the board of Admiralty to discharge them on application.

I most humbly beg you will move their Lordships to take this said case into consideration and order them to be discharged ...London, Dec 28th 1804, John Knight.

*Margin: having used the sea before indentures they were not entitled to a discharge.

[Adm 1/1531 B105]

422. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 4 January 1805

Bristol, 4 Jan 1805,

*An inquiry concerning Joseph Sanders, a boatswain who had been impressed. Barker said "he was Boatswain of the *Trelawney* West Indiaman when impressed. He is a stout able man and I have every reason to believe he is a perfect seaman."

Enclosure:

James Room for Philip John Miles, owner of the ship *Trelawney*, Bristol 2 January 1805

I beg leave to trouble you to lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of Joseph Sanders, who was impressed at Bristol and send on board the *Amy* tender. As he was the whole support of his Wife, five children and an aged Mother, the Friends of Joseph Sanders beg leave to offer to their Lordships two Landsmen to serve in his Stead, which offer they humbly beg their Lordships will accept of, and hope you will have the goodness to favour me with their Lordship's answer.

*Margin: asked to produce 4 landsmen for his discharge.

[Adm 1/1534 B 251]

***423. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 6 January 1805**

Bristol, 6 Jan 1805: George Barker responded to the inquiry about William Gibson. "He was impress'd by an Information of his having been at Sea several years in the late War, and Paid off from the Resolution at the conclusion of it.

He is an able Man, a Cabinet maker by trade, earns two guineas a week, and has a Wife by (but) no children."

Enclosure from J Smith cabinet maker, St John's Bridge Bristol, to Wm. Marsden Esq., Admiralty, 4 Jan 1805 Bristol.

Sir,

I am induced to apply to you on account of a Journeyman of mine, William Gibson, who was impressed last night in my Workshop by the Officer and Men in the Impress Service here. Some years ago he was a Carpenter in a Ship but on account of ill health was obliged to leave the Sea, and should suppose he can be of little use on board a King's ship. He is thirty years of age, married, and a very sober workman – the apothecary, under whose care he has been, is fearful of a consumption – during the eight months he has been in my service, he has not worked one half his time from illness – if their Lordships of the Admiralty would consent to his discharge I should have no objection to Advance him three or fur guineas towards raising a Landsman as a Substitute in his stead.

The favour of an answer will very much oblige, Sir, your most obedient servant, J Smith.

Margin: Lordships saw no grounds for his discharge.

[Adm 1/1534 B252]

424. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 11 January 1805

Bristol 11 Jan 1805:

William Pool produced to me a Certificate of his discharge from Plymouth Hospital in September 1797 for scurvy, but he is now quire recovered from it, and is perfectly sound and fit for the service.

The story of his being subject to fits, I have reason to think is fallacious, as he fail'd to bring forward the testimony of two respectable surgeons to prove it, which he was engaged to do, and as this complaint is very generally resorted to by impress'd Men, I am very cautious of the Characters that are brought forward to substantiate it.

This man is not a seaman, and I believe that he supports his Mother who labours under the affliction stated in the inclosure, but as I have no discretionary power I

thought it my duty to detain him for the service.

*Enclosure:

Jan 7 1805, Bristol. It featured a certificate that “William Pool, by Trade a Mason, has been afflicted with Fitts for upwards of three years and we the underwritten have many times assisted him & held him in when in Fitts within the last years as witness our Hands

Wm Quaintrall, Thomas Whatley, Mary Warren, Geo Lloyd, Mary Bidgood, Eliz Underhill, Wm Bedgood, Thomas Underhill. ..Addressed to Evan Bailee[Baillie], MP.

Margin: could be discharged upon producing a landsman.”

[Adm 1/1534 B252]

***425. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 25 January 1804**

23 January 1805, a case regarding William Weeks, who impulsively entered the navy.

Enclosure from Charles Bathurst, MP, 2 Corn Street, 12 Jan 1805
To Wm Marsden, Esquire,

“I shall be much oblig’d to you if you will have the goodness to let the inclosed be forwarded by the first opportunity to Lord Nelson.

Application has, I find, been lately made to the Admiralty by a Constituent of mine at Bristol for the discharge of a man by the name of Weeks, who in a moment of folly, left his Business by which he maintained a Mother & three children & entered as a Landsman on the 7th Inst (Jan) with the Regulating Captain there – a surgeon’s certificate accompanied the application of his being nearly blind on one Eye, & very subject to Fitts, but should those circumstances or the others I have mentioned be not be thought sufficient grounds, which I should much wish for his discharge, His Friends, who are respectable, would rather than fail in restoring him to his family, comply with any terms that are usually required in such cases.”

Barker said when Wm Weeks entered, he said he was 20 years of age “which from his appearance I judged him to be.”

Second enclosure:

Bristol 25 Small Street, Jan 5 1805, Sarah Weeks to William Marsden Esquire, at the Admiralty,

Sir, I leg leave to state to you as briefly as possible a circumstance of a most distressing nature and throw myself on your humanity for your kind assistance.

Yesterday morning My Son, a lad between 17 and 18 and upon whom I depend for my support and that of a large family, in a moment of Intoxication went to the Rendezvous and entered himself to go on Board the Tender. He never was at sea in his Life and had an excellent Situation in a Respectable Tobacconist’s Employ, the Earnings of which he always most punctually

brought home and without which assistance I must positively fail as well as the rest of my Family.

Captain Barker, the Regulating Officer, behaved to me with great Humanity and would have liberated the Boy had he not been sent to the Tender's Boat before the arrival of the Person whom I requested to go to Capt Barker in his Behalf. If you would be so good as to return an order to Captain Barker for his Release, the prayers of an afflicted Parent for your Help and Happiness would be the only but most sincere Compensation she could return you and in doing so you will, Sir, restore peace to an afflicted Family and God knows in all probability preserve the Life of

Your most afflicted but very humble servant, Sarah Weeks.

PS Capt Barker has most obligingly recommended to me to take this Measure as the only proper method to restore to me the assistance of my son which I stand so much in need of."

*Margin: The Admiralty's terms for Week's discharge were two able landsmen as substitutes.

[Adm 1/1534 B254]

426. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 24 January 1805

24 Jan 1805, the case of James Cullimore, an American impressed in Bristol.

Enclosure: Bristol, 20 January 1805, Ship *Apollo*

To William Marsden, Esquire, Admiralty

My Steward, James Cullimore, Imprest by Information & the Regulating Captain, having refused to give him up on my application, I am to request you will be pleased to inform their Lordships I am so distressed by the loss of him, being a very useful hand to me although no seaman, & also request that I be allowed to find an able bodied Landman to serve in his Room.

I am, Sir, your most obedient and Humble servant,
Archibald Ball, No. 10 Culver Street, Bristol.

Enclosure:

William Oliver of Newport, rigger, maketh Oath according to Law, that he is personally acquainted with James Cullimore, mariner, and was acquainted with his mother in Newbury Port, Massachusetts, when this Deponent sailed from said Port some years ago; and that this deponent was born in Hingham in Massachusetts, and hath always understood and does fully believe said James Cullimore was born in Newbury Port, County of Essex, in said state of Massachusetts.

Sworn the 2nd day of November 1804, William[his mark] Oliver.

[Adm 1/1534 B255]

426. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 24 January 1805

Bristol, January 24th 1805

Sir, John Hicks is entered landman. He says he is twenty years of age, which from his appearance I should judge him to be. He is five foot eight high and very stout made.

Enclosure: No 9 Horsefair, Bristol, 21 January 1805

Sir,

I beg leave to trouble you to lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the Case of John Hicks a Boy of 17 years of age, who entered at Bristol to serve in the navy, but being tall of his age, passed himself with the Officers in the impress service for a Landsman. He being the oldest of 6 children and his Father dead, was a great support to his Mother & the other young ones, a few neighbours of Mary Hicks, being a very poor woman, begs leave to offer a substitute to serve in his Stead, which they sincerely beg their Lordships will accept of, and hope you will indulge me with their Lordships' answer,

Your obedient and very humble servant, Evan Evans.

[Adm 1/1534 B 256]

428. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 27 January 1805

Bristol, 27 Jan 1805, a letter regarding Samuel Moreman.

Enclosure: to William Marsden Esquire,

I am induced to apply to thee on behalf of Samuel Moreman, the son of a poor industrious Collier in this Neighbourhood of Sixteen Years of Age, who has always lived with his Parents and never been at sea, but being entered by a companion on fifth Day[Thursday?] the 17 Instant, he entered at the rendezvous here and is now on Board the Tender. His being a great Support to his Parents and their great distress on the Occasion caused me to apply to the Regulating Captain Barker, who refused his Liberation, and some Friends advised me to apply to the Lords of the Admiralty under whom thou actest, and a knowledge of the Parties who are very poor and their Distress occasioned by the Lad's foolish Behaviour has induced this Application.

The Favour of thy Answer will very much oblige thy assured Friend,

Thomas Morris,

No 9 Peter Street

[Adm 1/1534 B 258]

429. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 1 March 1805

Bristol, 1 March 1805, Barker reported that the two boys had been discharged from the navy.

Enclosure:

My Dear Sir

Have the goodness to excuse my troubling you on a subject which interests the happiness of a poor couple in our Parish of Stapleton & which as I in some measure was the occasion of I feel it a kind of duty to do what I can to relieve them

Thursday week at our Petty Sessions I sign'd a warrant against some boys who were playing during Divine Service the Sunday before on the application of the Church Warden. This crime we usually punish by having the culprit see the inside of a Prison with all the terrific apparatus of Fetters, Chains, Dark Cells &c and then usually dismiss them after a Preachment (sic) & ordering the Constables expenses to be paid.

I find that the two boys for whom I am now petitioning you went up to the Church Warden to beg his pardon, but not finding him & having I suppose the dread of Justice Harford before them they went into Bristol & entered at the Rendezvous house. The eldest is sixteen in May & the youngest fourteen in September.

Capt Barker was not the officer who received them but he says by what he hears the youngest will not do for the service. However I will presume he may be kept & now request the discharge of Millington Merritt and Robert Merritt stone cutters now on board the tender at Kingroad.

They work with their father, who is himself a labouring Quarry Man, & are just now come to be useful and contribute to the Support of their Parents.

I hope I am not taking an improper liberty but if you were to see the distress of the Poor People, I am sure you would excuse my troubling you & I believe if in your power[you would] relieve them from their misery.

Your very obedient humble servant, Charles Joseph Harford.

Dighton St, Feb 26 1805.

Margin: Barker to discharge the boys if properly represented in repayment of bounty[money] or any other expenses that might have been incurred. Let Mr. Harford know it.

[Adm 1/ 1534 B261]

430. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 26 March 1805

Bristol, 26 March 1805, regarding the qualifications of John Bays:

"I beg acquaint you that he is rated Ordinary, has been five years in the trows, and is a very able man. He was first impressed but entered afterwards."

Enclosure from Anthony Bays and Sarah Bays 18 March 1805.

Dear Sir,

My son, John Bays, who have been the Intire Support of myself and an Aged Mother above this two years, which is the time he has been freed from his apprenticeship which he serv'd the owner of trows that trade up and down ye Bristol River. He was unfortunately prest three weeks back and put on board the *United Brothers* Tender now lying in Kingroad. His master, who values him for his attention to his hard Labour & Filial Affection to his Parents, has offer'd to advance him sufficient[money] to obtain a substitute, and take the money advanced in monthly instalments. Therefore

I most humbly solicit your Kind Favour & Interest in Releasing him & accepting a substitute in his Room, as it will be the Intire Ruin of us is he is Torn from us; nor will he be ever happy knowing our Existence depends on his Labours, as myself & wife are both aged & past our Labour, your kind attention to our truly distressed cases, by releasing our son & accepting a substitute.

Will ever insure you his most grateful thanks and the blessing of your most distressed humble servant,

Anthony Bays[his mark] Sarah Bays[her mark]

Please to direct for me at Davey's Dean Street, St James Churchyard, Bristol.

[Adm 1/1534 B265]

***431. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 30 March 1805**

Bristol, 20 March 1805

“The three men named in the margin[Thomas Williams, Matthew Phillips, Thomas Cooper] hereof belonging to the *Sampson* of Chepstow, were impressed on shore last night out of a Public House. The Owners of the Vessel have applied to me for their discharge and produced a protection from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty dated the 17th January last, but as they were impressed on shore, and not employed in the service of the vessel, I have detained them for the Fleet. They are perfect seamen and very stout young men. Having occasion to think that application will be made to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for their discharge I have therefore thought it my duty to state the case for their Information.”

In another letter, dated 7 April 1805, Barker added that the three men “sailed yesterday in the *United Brothers* Tender for Plymouth, and as they expressed a wish to the Lieutenant of her to be permitted to enter, I have directed him to send them as volunteers.”

Enclosure:

My Lords,

I beg leave to state to your Lordships that Thomas Williams, Thomas Cooper and Matthew Phillips (belonging to the *Sampson* now lying at Bristol loaded with the Navy Timber for Plymouth Yard) are pressed and now on board the *Brothers* Tender. I have applied to the regulating Captain, Captain Barker, who informed me he cannot clear them unless directed by your Lordships.

I first beg leave to state that I am a Contractor for Navy Timber and am under heavy penalties for fulfilling my contracts to the limited time, which will be impossible for me to comply with if I cannot help my Men. I therefore trust your Lordships will give orders for their release as the Vessel is now waiting for want of men. The truth of what I have advanced can be certified by the Honorable Commissioners of the Navy.

I am with respect my Lords, &c, Henry Lewis

[Adm 1/1534 B 266, 268]

432. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 22 April 1805

Letter of 22 April 1805, concerning John Yeates.

Enclosure

Bristol 19 April 1805:

To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioner of His Majesties Board of Admiralty

My Lords,

I beg leave to state that I am an aged inform widow carrying on the business of a Trow owner and carrier on the River Severn. My son, John Yeates, conducted the business for me but in an important moment he entered into his Majestie's Service and is now on board the tender at Bristol Harbour. He has never been at sea and is now conscious of the loss his afflicted mother will sustain for want of his assistance. I therefore humbly beg your Lordships will in your goodness be pleased to direct the Regulating Captain for the Port of Bristol to release my said son, John Yeates, under such conditions as your Lordships may be pleased to direct.

I am very respectfully, &c, Mary Yeates.

Margin: could be discharged for two able bodied landsmen.

[Adm 1/1534 B 269]

433. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 23 April 1805

Bristol, 23 April 1805

In consequence of your letter of the 5th of June last, directing me to pay the usual conduct money to Sea Fencibles or others bringing in impressed seamen, I have paid for seven impressed men and two boys sent to me by Captain Blake in commanding the Sea Fencibles at Gloucester at the rate of 3d a mile for one petty affair and 1 penny per mile for each of the new pressed men who escorted them, which I conceived to be the intention of the order from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty above alluded to.

I enclose you a copy of the Navy Board's letter acquainting me that it will be necessary for me to obtain an order of the Admiralty to be allowed this expense.

Enclosure to Capt Barker, Impress Service Bristol.

Sir, We have received your letter of the 9th instant with Captain Blake's letter and a copy of Mr. Marsden's to you and acquaint you that we do not consider Mr. Marsden's letter to supercede the 10th article of your instructions, and that it will be necessary for you to obtain an order from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to be allowed the £2-12-6d paid for conducting nine new raised men & boys from Gloucester to Bristol.

We are, Sir, your affectionate friends, W Palmer, J Gambier, F J Hartwell.

[Adm 1/1534 B270]

434. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 9 May 1805

Letter of 9 May 1805 concerning Henry Perry.

Enclosure

Sir,

I take the Liberty of troubling you respecting an apprentice of mine (belonging to the Brig *Sophia* a Dublin trader of which I am owner.) Henry Perry, aged eighteen years who has been at sea one year & half, was impress'd last night by the officers her on the Service. I have applied for his discharge & produced his indentures to the Regulating Captain who has refus'd his release in consequence of the boy having made a voyage prior to his apprenticeship (a common rule in the coasting trade). As the Lad is very serviceable to me & can be at present of little use in His Majestie's Service, I have taken the freedom of writing you thereon humbly requesting the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty will be pleased to take this business into their consideration and order his Discharge. The favour of any answer will very much oblige, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, John Cullis

Bristol 7 May 1805, No 67 Broad Quay.

*Henry Perry was 3 months at sea before apprenticed; Admiralty ordered his discharge on evidence of his apprenticeship.

[Adm 1/1534 B 275]

435. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 14 May 1805

Bristol, 14 May 1805

The man alluded to in Mr. Worrall's Letter is an ordinary seamen, has been several years in the Trows, and is a very stout able Man, The Aldermen of this City applied to me for this man's discharge, which I refused, not seeing any grounds upon which it would be claimed, as he has no protection whatever, nor did he belong to a vessel bringing Provision.

Enclosure

Bristol 11 May 1805

My Lords, I am directed by the Aldermen of this City, in the absence of the Mayor, to represent to your Lordships that Captain Barker, the regulating officer at this port, has impressed a man from one of the Trows or Barges navigating up and down the Severn and bringing provisions to this City, in consequence of which the men have deserted the Vessel and gone up the Country. I need not describe to your Lordships the severe inconvenience and alarming evil that must result to the Inhabitants here and the neighbourhood if a free passage be not allow'd in bringing up provisions to the port, and therefore the Magistrates trust that immediate measures may be adopted for the discharge of the impressed man and that Captain Barker be instructed to prevent the probability of the like occurrence. I have the honor to be, &c Samuel Worrall, Town Clerk.

Margin: 16 May, Lords of the Admiralty saw no grounds for ordering his discharge.

[Adm 1/1534 B277]

436. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 24 May 1805

Bristol, letter of 24 May regarding James Green, who was impressed as an ordinary seaman.

Enclosure, Bristol, 22 May 1805

Yours Honours,

I have to inform your Honours that on the 7th instant my brother was impressed and I can assure your Honours that he never was at sea. He has an aged mother and two sisters and a brother who are entirely depending on his Labour, and I should think it as an act of Charity if your Honours would discharge him by getting substitutes and in so doing you will greatly relieve the mind of an aged mother and relieve the fatherless.

I remain your most obedient and very humble servant, Thomas Green, for my Brother, James Green, on board the *Amy* Tender who sailed from here the 10th Instant.

Your answer will be considered as a great favour and please to direct to Thomas Green, No 7 Merchants Court, Bristol.

Margin: James Green to be discharged once he produces an ordinary seamen and an able bodied landsman. 24 May 1805.

[Adm 1/1534, B279]

437. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 13 July 1805

Bristol, 13 July 1805.

In reply to your letter of yesterdays date directing the case of William Peters to be stated, I beg to acquaint you that this man was taken up by the civil power in this City on suspicion of committing a theft, and discharged on conditions of his entering for the navy, which he consented to do. He is an able bodied landsman, and was sent to Plymouth in the *United Brothers* Tender on the 9th instant.

Enclosure, dated 9 July 1805

Honoured Sir,

I humbly hope you will pardon the liberty to which I am constrained by said necessity, being the wife of William Peters, who was taken by the press gang on Wednesday last and has three children besides another coming very shortly. He was never employed on the Sea in his life and tho may appear to have those personal advantages which fit him for the consequent improvement of experience, yet[he] is a very improper Person for any such calling being afflicted in his sight as well as health of body, for he is at times so short breathed that he can scarce reach the top of

the stairs without halting by the way, and the Doctors have given their opinion that he is also a Liver case and give him very faint hopes of a cure, and having seen his affliction which a wife cannot avoid in particular renders my own affliction greater than I can bear. The eldest of my children is only four years old and I have no friend on the Earth now he is gone and to reflect on my condition with one child who is not nine months old overwhelms me almost to despair. I hope, Sir, your goodness will be one in my behalf to make use of your Interest to have my Husband Released. I will part from everything I have in the world to procure a substitute as my case without him is truly deplorable and I have represented the truth and nothing else shall esteem it an everlasting favor if you will please to inform me of your approbation by a few lines addressed to Martha Peters, No 2 Bread Street, St Phillips, Bristol.

My husband's employer Mr Ladymore, Cornfactor, Redcliffe Street, Bristol, will attest the truth of what is here contained. Also Mr Beck, liquor merchant, St James, Bristol, and Mr William Shepard, the Castle, Bristol...and Mr Palmer on Redcliffe Back, Bristol. Your indulgence to this request will greatly oblige and be ever acknowledged with gratitude by Sir, your most devoted, MP.

Margin: Admiralty decided William Peters could be discharged on producing an able bodied landsman, which was technically his own status.

[Adm 1/1534 B 280]

438. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 30 August 1805

Bristol 30 August 1805

The three men named in the margin have entered with me for His Majesties' Service from the American ship, *Atlas*, Peter Spenser master, who refused to pay their wages as they agreed to perform the voyage from New York to Bristol and back; but as the two first are British subjects, I have stated their case to you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and acquaint you that the ship will sail for New York in a few days.

*Margin: The men were James Sergeant, able seaman, born in Ireland; Isaac Dickinson able seaman, born in Liverpool, William Swanson, able seaman born in Norway. The Admiralty said the men entered as foreign subjects and their wage dispute was beyond its jurisdiction.

[Adm 1/1534 B280a]

439. Captain George Barker to Willliam Marsden, 25 August 1805

Bristol, 25 August 1805

Sir,

As the *Amy* tender is discharged from His Majesties Service, and it will be necessary to send the *United Brothers* to Plymouth shortly with the new raised

men, I think it my duty to acquaint you therewith for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, as there is no vessel here to receive the men who may be raised in their absence. I beg leave here to suggest to their Lordships that if an old gun brig was fitted with a Press Room and moored in the River to receive the men from the rendezvous, the expense of one Tender might be saved, and if a small jolly boat is allowed, then the expense of boat hire to send the new raised men off may also be saved, nor need they even be victualled on shore. If this Plan meets their Lords' approbation, the Tender now here may be kept constantly cruising the Channel, and going to adjacent ports, calling occasionally at Swansea for the men raised there, who by being sent with the men of this port, would facilitate both ports getting to the Fleet

[Adm 1/1534 B281]

***440. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 3 September 1805**

Bristol, 3 Sept 1805, the case of Thomas Nelson, who entered on the *Amy* tender 6 Aug 1805 and was now on board the *United Brothers* in Kingroad. He was 20 years of age but had never been to sea. He had been supplied with slop clothing while on board the tender.

Enclosure. To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Board of Admiralty

The humble petition of John White, of the City of Bristol, patten ring maker.

Sheweth, That by an indenture of apprenticeship bearing date the 21st Day of February 1801, Thomas Nelson (therein described) did put himself apprentice to your petitioner & Elizabeth his wife with them to dwell and serve for the term of seven years thence ensuing which said indenture was executed under the immediate sanction of William Gibbons, Esquire, Mayor of the said City of Bristol & Robert Castle, & Samuel Brick Esquires, sheriffs of the same place, pursuant to the rules and orders made & enacted for the Regulation of Apprentices bound by the said City.

That under & by virtue of the said Indenture the said Thomas Nelson entered on his said apprenticeship & served your Petitioners according to the terms of the same until on or about the 7th Day of August now last past when he absconded & left your Petitioner's service and entered himself at Pill near the City of Bristol aforesaid on board the Tender there stationed called the *Brothers* commanded by Lieutenant William McKensy[McKenzie].

That your petitioner has thereby already suffered much loss & will hereafter (if said apprentice is detained) suffer much greater loss the said apprentice being of essential service to your petitioner in the carrying on of his business.

That altho the said apprentice entered voluntarily into his Majestie's Service yet that willing & desirous to return to your Petitioner's service & your Petitioner is willing to receive him again and forgive him.

Your petitioner therefore most humbly Prays That your Lordships will be pleased to grant your Lordships' most gracious Order of Discharge to the said apprentice, the said Thomas Nelson, that he may be speedily liberated

from on Board the said Tender or from on Board what other ship he may now be for the purpose of being restored to the employment of your petitioner.
And your Petitioner will ever pray
Messrs Mayo & Pease, 2 Cloak Lane, Cheapside.

Margin: Admiralty ordered his discharge once he paid for clothing.

[Adm 1/1534 B281]

441. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 8 September 1805

*Bristol, 8 Sept 1805, regarding Thomas Culverstone.

“He was impressed by an information of his having several voyages to the West Indies, which I have reason to believe is true. He is an able bodied men, about 20 years of age, rated ordinary, and is now onboard the *United Brothers* Tender.”

Enclosure: letter to William Marsden, Esq., Bristol, 5 Sept 1805

Sir, I take the liberty of addressing you on behalf of Thomas Culverstone, a youth aged 19, who has for about two years past been employ’d in my timber yard as a Latherender²¹ & other sorts of Work, but was unfortunately two nights ago impress’d out of his mother’s house upon information of his having been to Sea & is at this time in Custody at a house of Rendezvous in this City. In Fact I believe he went on a Voyage to the West Indies prior to his working for me, but did not like the service & resolved not to go again. He is of puny Constitution & is frequently afflicted with a Pain in his Bowels & therefore will not be much acquisition to his Majesty’s Service. He was so ill a little while ago that a medical man attended him above a fortnight. He is a useful hand in my service & I sho’d be sorry to part with him. I hope therefore you will have the goodness to take his Case into consideration & give him a discharge which will very uch oblige me & will be a great consolation to his distress’d Mother. I have the honour to be, Sir your most obedient humble servant,
Thomas Rous.

Margin: having used the sea cannot be discharged.

[Adm 1/1534 B284]

***442. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 15 September 1805**

Bristol, 15 Sept 1805, regarding William Williams.

Barker said “He served his time to the sea out of this port, and has continued the sea service three years since. He has every appearance of an able seaman, and an able bodied man.”

The Admiralty would not discharge him in the circumstances.

²¹ A lathe-maker and very likely a lathe-worker in this instance.

But an enclosure represented his case thus: dated Bristol 13 Sept, 1805.

“My Lords and Gentleman,

Humbly trusting your Lordships will pardon the liberty I take in this addressing you; I am induced to trouble you respecting my son William Williams, a young man who have been impress'd here yesterday by the officers in the Service. I applied for his release to Captain Barker who refused it, & said it was not in his Power. I am recommended by some of my friends to apply to you stating his case & flatter myself when you find my representations correct, you will order his discharge. He is 23 years of age & a very delicate constitution, has not been bred up to the Sea, but assisted me in my trade as a Saddler; Having some concerns in the West Indies I sent him out last year in the Ship *Nile*, West Indiaman of this port, thereby thinking it would not only mend his health but he might be able to settle my affairs & accrue for me some Debts which were due. Being seiz'd with the yellow Fever at little before he left Savannah la Mar about five months ago, He is not yet perfectly recover'd from the effect of it; besides he is not a Seaman, although he has been twice to the West Indies formerly went to a relation of mine about 5 years ago. 4 men died in the *Nile* on their homeward passage & during her quarantine it had the effect of hurting and injuring my Son's Health, then scarcely recover'd from the Fever, when in Savannah la Mar he was not expected to live. He is a favourite son & my Wife's Health is very bad...on these accounts My Lords, in great anguish of mind I am induc'd to supplicate on behalf of my son, praying your Lordships will order Captain Barker to discharge him. And your Petitioner in duty bound will ever be thankful,

I remain, your Lordships most humble servant, William Williams, No 13 Broad Street, Sadler.”

[Adm 1/1534 B285]

443. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 18 October 1805

The case of Edward Drake:

Enclosure from Richard Miller, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, 18 October 1805.
Sir,

At the recommendation of a Magistrate I hereby give you information of Edward Drake, a seamen who I understand has been upwards of three years on board a Ship, before the Mast. He stands about five foot six inches and is about Thirty years of age – at lodgings at Thomas Yates at the Bourne in the parish of Stroud. He being so dangerous & malicious a character & Bristol being so near, do you not think it would be adviseable to send him to Portsmouth. The Neighbours offer to raise a subscription for defraying what expense may incur in that Case.

I am respectfully, your most humble servant, Richard Miller.

Margin: the Admiralty declined the offer.

[Adm 1/1534 B 288]

444. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 22 October 1805

Bristol, 22 Oct 1805, regarding an assault in Pill.

Enclosure

Letter 20 October 1805, Kingroad

Sir, I beg leave to represent to you while in the execution of my duty in Pill, I impressed an able seamen in the house of Joseph Hook Innkeeper on which Mrs. Hook, her daughter and female servant rescued the man, secured him in their house or favoured his escape through a back way & violently assaulted myself & tore my uniform cloaths, during the latter part Joseph Hook was present and did not prevent his own family or others from the assault on my person. I have to request, Sir, that you will lay their conduct before My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that such steps may be taken with them as their Lordships may deem fit, and I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

Wm McKenzie, Lieutenant, commanding officer of the *United Brothers* tender.

Margin: The Admiralty thought the parties concerned might be prosecuted.

[Adm 1/1534 B 291]

445. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 2 February 1806

Bristol, 2 Feb 1806

Olof Dahlberg was impressed by an information that he was an Englishman, but upon one proof being given that he was a Swede, I discharged him immediately. He was soon afterwards arrested for debt, and sent down to the Rendezvous with a message from Mr Alderman Claxton desiring that he may be sent to the Fleet. Considering that Mr Claxton was acting in his authority as a Magistrate, I ordered him to be send on board the *United Brothers* Tender. He is now on his passage to Plymouth in the name of William Dall Bery.

[Adm 1/1537 B 65]

446. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 7 March 1806

Bristol, 7 March 1806.

I beg leave to state to you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of Michael Smithwick who was impressed last night by Lieutenant Lucas out of a Publick House. Application was made to me this morning for his discharge on the ground of his being an apprentice, but as it appears he has served more than three years from the date of his indentures, I refused it. The inclosed certificate has been since produced to prove that he is mate of the vessel, but as the name is not spelt alike, and the certificate dated during his apprenticeship, I suspect there is some fraud. I have therefore detained him for His Majestie's Service till I

have their Lordships further directions. He is near nineteen years of age, and a stout, able young man.

PS Be pleased to return the certificate.

Margin: Admiralty approved of the impressment

[Adm 1/1537 B69]

447. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 21 March 1806

Bristol, 21 March 1806

In reply to your letter of yesterday's date, directing the case of Francis Metcalfe to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg leave to acquaint you that he was impressed on the 10th instant from the American brig *Henry* on board which vessel he was serving as chief mate, passing for an American seaman with the enclosed protection, but he is well known in Bristol to be an Englishman, out of which port he has sailed in the African trade many years, and when reference made at the Custom House...he appears by them as declared by himself to have been born in Lancaster. When he was impressed by Lieutenant Williams he asserted that he had sailed out of New York for the last seventeen years, but he now acknowledges his handwriting in the articles alluded to above, tho he still persists that he was at New York. He was married in Bristol in 1797 since which time his wife has lived occasionally at Bristol and Liverpool. He is a perfect seaman, thirty years of age.

Enclosure: certificate of citizenship[largely printed]

Elias Vander Horst Esquire, Consul of the United States of America for the Port of Bristol, &c

Witnesseth that the Bearer hereof Francis Metcalfe[description of back side: 5ft 7 inches, light complexion, brown hair, blue eyes 28 yrs of age] in actual employ as a Chief Mate on board the American vessel, *Henry*, Captain Charles Busch, belonging to New York in the state of New York, appears by two affidavits made this day...[one before Sir John Durbin Alderman of this City] to have been born in New York in the State of the same name, and to be a subject of the United States of America; as such being liable to be called upon in the service of his Country, must not on any Pretense whatsoever be interrupted in his lawful Business, whilst on board or belonging to the said Ship, either by Impress Masters or any Other Officers, Civil or Military. But the said Francis Metcalfe, having lately left his original certificate of Citizenship in Lisbon, this is granted to serve in case of need until he can recover it or return to his native Country & which is not to exceed three months from this date.

Given under my Hand and Seal of Office, at Bristol aforesaid, this twenty fifth day of February in the year of our Lord Eighteen Hundred and Six, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the Thirtieth, Elias Vander Horst, Esquire.

Margin: Francis Metcalfe not to be discharged but to be sent to Plymouth.

[Adm 1/1537 B72]

448. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 25 March 1806

Bristol, 25 March 1806.

Sir,

I beg leave to state to you for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of Richard Bayley, an able seaman twenty two years of age, who was impressed on shore yesterday (by Lieutenant Williams) whilst aiding and assisting the mob who were assaulting an owner of a Trow for conveying one of his Men to the Rendezvous. He says he is the Master of the *Mayflower*, a sloop rigged vessel between 40 and 50 Tons, and he appears as such upon the Register of the Vessel produced to me this morning, but as there is no other person belonging to her except a small boy and the owner who was formerly Master of her, and who still continues to sail in the vessel, I do consider that Richard Bayley is not the real Master but appears as such for the sake of Protection, as the tonnage does not protect a Mate.

Margin: If the vessel is not of the size to protect the mate then he should be detained

[Adm 1/1537 B73]

***449. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 13 April 1806**

Bristol, 13 April 1806.

Barker reported that three trowmen, Daniel Wintle of the *John* trow, 24, and John Alchurch and Philip Bay, aged 31 and 30 of the *Hopewell* trow, had been impressed. They were impressed because “there are no articles of agreement between them and their masters”. All were considered able men and impressed as ordinary seamen. Barker thought it reasonable to detain “men employed in vessels of that description & from the towns on the Severn”, but he was ordered “to discharge them & deliver them to the Mayor of Bristol.”

Later, after the meeting of the trow owners on 9 May 1806, it was decided that being ordinary seamen they could not be discharged.

[Adm 1/1537 B77]

450. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 24 April 1806

Bristol, 24 April 1806

In obedience to the direction of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty respecting the number of Trows and Men employed, at and in the neighbourhood of Bristol, I beg to acquaint you for their Lordships' information that from the best account I can obtain at the Custom House, it appears that there are ninety-eight Trows (from 60 to 120 tons) employed between Bristol and the different parts of the Rivers Severn and Wye, navigated by five hundred and eighty-eight men.

As their Lordships were also pleased to direct me to give my opinion as to the number of men that should be promised from this body for the protection of the rest, I beg to observe that from the knowledge I have of them, I have reason to think that not one third of them were liable to the impress. I therefore submit to your Lordships better judgment whether fifty men from their number would not be a proportion.

Margin: Direct him to propose a Quota of one man in ten of those who are liable to the press.

*A subsequent letter, Bristol, 9 May 1806, reveals that the Admiralty were going to take 1 man in 10 of those liable.

Enclosure

At a meeting of Severn Traders held at the Lower George Inn Gloucester on Wednesday the 7th May 1806, to take into consideration the proportion made by the Admiralty to the Severn Trade through Captain Barker, the regulating officer at Bristol, vizt.

That if the Owners trading on the Severn do at their own expense find and prove one able man for his Majestie's Service for every ten men they employ, their hands will be protected from the impress during the war.

Mr. Robert Neeles in the chair

Present: Samuel Barnett, Stourport; William Devey, Bewdley; John Soule, Worcester; William Pugh, Worcester; John Harris, Droitwich; George Harris, Droitwich; Thomas Nevitt, Bridgnorth; Thomas Beard, Broseley; John Lankester, Bewdley; Benjamin Yates, Tewkesbury; Samuel Thorn, Upton; Richard Folley, Gloucester.

Resolved: That it is the duty of all good subjects to support the Government which protects them, and that this meeting are desirous to shew their readiness upon this occasion.

That it would be highly proper and praiseworthy in the Severn trade to step forward and render that assistance at this important crisis, which they are called upon to do, namely to raise one man for his Majestie's service for every ten men liable to Impress they employ. That the Traders present whose names are before mentioned, will procure such men without delay according to that proportion and deliver them to the proper officer.

Robert Neeles, Chairman.

[Adm 1/1537 B80, 83]

451. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 13 May 1806

Bristol, 13 May 1806

Sir,

I beg leave to state to you for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of Three persons named in the margin [Samuel Seidlinger, able seaman, 27, William Carr, able seaman, 25, Charles McKinnon, apprentice, 18] here of who have been impressed from the American brig *Speculation* by Lieutenant Williams on an information from three of the crew of the same vessel that they are

British subjects. The Informants who have entered for His Majestie's Service state that William Carr declared to them that he is an Englishman and that he bought the protection he now produces. He does not answer the description, having no appearance of a scar as mentioned therein. Samuel Seidlinger has frequently told them that he was born in Wales, and when they came into the Bristol Channel, he pointed to the Welch shore as his native land. He is three inches shorter than the protection mentions, and is about twenty-seven years of age. Charles McKinnon is said to be born in Dublin, and to have deserted from an English sloop at Liverpool where he shipped on board the *Speculator*. He has an Irish accent strong, but upon his examination he denies ever having being in Ireland, or any part of England till the present voyage. The master of the vessel to whom he is apprenticed confided to me that the ship was at Liverpool.

I have under these circumstances detained them till I have their Lordships directions.

Margin: Admiralty approved of Barker impressing them.

[Adm 1/1537 B85]

452. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 17 June 1806

Enclosure:

Bristol, 17 June 1806.

The owners of the Severn Trows whose names are subscribed to the resolutions transmitted by men the 9th May last have procured their quota of men (six in number) agreeable thereunto. From the best information I can obtain, there are about Forty owners of Trows who declined attending the meeting as the number of men employed by them, individually, does not bring them within the limits of their Lordships proportion, some of them employing six men only, and none more than fifteen in the whole. I intend to bring those people to act collectively, but if their Lordships would approve of the men employed by them being impressed (who are liable) I have no doubt but they would raise the proportion of men required of them.

Margin: Barker ordered to give them notice in case of any difficulties putting the quota into execution.

[Adm 1/1537 B92]

453. Captain George Barker to William Marsden, 17 July 1806

Bristol, 17 July 1806

Sir,

In obedience to yours of this day's date, directing me to state the Case of John Creed, late of *Ulysses*, who is now on board the *Enchantress*. John Creed, aged 25 years, one year and a half at sea, will make a strong healthy man and is in my opinion a fit Subject for His Majestie's Service.

He was press'd by myself from the *Ulysses*[West] Indiaman on the 7th Instant, having nothing whatever to protect him but the Enclosed Certificate which I send for your information which appears to me to be altered from Six to Eight, and in my opinion was given by Col. Baillie for the express purpose of manning the *Ulysses*, of which he is owner.

I did not conceive that Col Baillie could give leave of absence for any man to go out of his Corps to serve as Sailor in the Merchant Service, and was actually mustered as one of the crew of the said Ship, for which reason I impressed him.

Margin: could not be discharged

[Adm 1/1537 B96]

454. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, Admiralty Office

Bristol, 23 July 1806

In reply to your letter of yesterday's date directing the case of William Castle to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he came home in the *Defiance* from the West Indies in the last convoy, and was impressed by Lieutenant Lucas a few days after, but discharged by my order, being a foreigner. Since which he has married a Bristol woman and was in consequence impressed again by Lieutenant Lucas on the 15th instant and sent to the *Enchantress*. He was engaged to go out in the *Defiance* in the next voyage as chief mate. He is a perfect seaman, twenty two years of age.

Enclosure:

Bristol, on board of His Majesties Ship, *Enchantress*.

To my sorrow I am obliged to inform you that I was going from Holland the begin[ing] of the War aboard of a Holland West Indiaman and I was taken by an English privateer from Liverpool called the *Lancaster*, Captain Pettygrave, and[who] was in want of a carpenter. He did ask if I would repair the Schooner, so I did. He promised me that he should give me my Liberty. We arrived with the privateer and my own ship called the *Vigilantie of Rhisenge* of Zeeland, my Captain kept his word and give me my Liberty and beside 5 pounds. He give me advise for to go to America, so I did, and so I engaged myself on board of a[n] American ship called the *Francis* and tarried for New York for to work for my passage. I arrived in New York and was engaged there for to go to Canada. I married there a Canadian woman with one child and remained there till this time the 14th of October 1805. I Thought proper to Gone Home with my wife and family to Rotterdam in Holland for to see my parents. I took my wife and child with me. As soon as I arrived in Bristol I was pressed but I was free clear again. There was one information after me that I was married and took me up and brought me on board of His Majestie's Ship *Enchantress* for to transport me to Plymouth to some other man of war.

Now my Dear Sir, Here is my wife and children in Great Misery no body to maintain Her but my few cloth[e]s what I brought with me and is big with one other child. O my dear Sir, it is very Hard for to fight my own parents. No, I cannot. I got no friends or no family Hear in England Now I take you, my Dear Sir, for my

helper, and God give you Blessings if you can be so kind and help me from the Man of War. I cannot fight my own father. You may consider this is for to make a[n] end of my life and what must become of my wife and family. Help me, dear Sir, for God almighty's Sake and I wil[l] Remain your most[humble?] and obedient Servant for ever, William Castle.

Margin: Having married a woman in Bristol (and in Canada?) cannot be discharged.

Further enclosure:

Royal Oak, Princes Street, Bristol July 22nd, 1806

Sir, Beg the favour of you to lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of my husband Wm Castle who was impressed at Bristol on the 14th instant. He is a native of America and served his apprentice[ship] to a joiner in that country, had been only one Voige[Voyage] to England when we were married and in three weeks after he was Pressed and Obligated to serve in the Navy – hopes their lordships will grant me the Favour to permit me to find Substitute or Substitutes to serve in his place and Flatter myself you will indulge me with their Lordships answer as soon as convenient and youl[you'll] greatly oblige your most obedient Humble Servt, Lucy Castle.

PS Please direct Lucy Castle, at Mrs Williams, Next Door to Earls Tin Man, Hotwell Road, Bristol.

[Adm 1/1537 B97]

455. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 5 October 1806

Bristol, 5 October, 1806, letter regarding John Jacobs, an able seaman, 30 years of age, who “came home in the last convoy from the West Indies & boatswain of the Jamaica.”

Enclosure from wife.

Black Horse, Hot Wells Road, Bristol, 30 September, 1806

Sir, Begs the favor we will Lay before the Lords Commissioner of the Admiralty The Case of my Husband John Jacobs who was Impressed at Bristol on the 30th September 1806. As he is the whole Support of me and four children Begs the favour of their Lordships to Accept of a Substitute to serve In his place which will be provided by my friend as soon as you will please to favor me with their Lordships' Answer. Honoured Sir, Your very humble ...Servant, Mary Jacobs.

Margin: Could not be discharged

[Adm 1/1537 B 103]

456. S.J. Wyld, JP, to Captain George Barker, 10 November 1806

10 November 1806.

Sir,

An able bodied Seaman about three years ago deserted from his Majestie's Service and is now resident in the parish of Burrington, twelve miles from Bristol, on the Bridgwater road. If you think proper to send for him, I will direct your men where they may meet with him. I trouble you on this occasion in consequence of an information laid before me this morning by two men to claim a reward.

I am Sir, your very obedient Servant,

S. J. Wyld, one of his Majesty's Justice for the County of Somerset, Burrington.

[Adm 1/1537 B 106, enclosure]

457. Captain Edward Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 30 December 1806

Bristol, 30 Dec 1806

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 29th Instant directing the case of John Creed to be stated for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed in July last from one of the homeward bound West Indiamen by Lieutenant Pearce of the *Enchantress*. He then applied to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for his discharge, which their Lordships refused, and which I was directed to make known to Him by your letter of 21st July last. He afterwards deserted from the Ship and has been now taken by Lieutenant Lucas from the *Venus* West Indiaman outward bound...He has been three or four years at sea and is a very stout able man.

Enclosure

Bristol 28th Dec. 1806,

Sir, You will be pleased to lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the Deplorable Situation I am in, by having my Husband who is very Sickly and Unfit for the Service taken from me by the Press Gang here. I am big with child, and have no other way of support but him. He likewise supports his old father and mother and if he was examined by any Doctor, he would be found more fit for an Hospital than a ship, having entirely lost the use of his Right Hand,

I have the honour to be, Sir, your Obedt. Humble Servant, Mary Creed

Address

Mary Creed at Mrs James's Griffin Lane, Bristol.

[Adm 1/1537 B 110]

458. Captain Edward Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 27 January 1807

27 Jan 1807, Bristol.

Reporting the case of William Chivers, impressed by Lieutenant Lucas on 23 January from the British Queen

Enclosure

Sir,

The purport of this is to beg to favour that you will lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of William Chivers, who was Impressed at Bristol on the 22nd Instant. He has an Ailment in his neck which he has had for these three years past, which affliction – added to the support of a Wife and three children – [h]as made him destitute of leaving any support for his Family, but in consideration of his good c[h]aracter his Friends petition that their Lordships will accept of a substitute or substitutes to serve in his place which will be provided by them. Hopes to be indulged with their Lordships' answer, and as in duty bound will ever pray,
 an afflicted wife and your very obedient humble servant, William Jackson,
 Old Market Street, Bristol, 24 January 1807.

Margin: Cannot be discharged. Being an able seaman and in every respect fit for the service.

[Adm 1/1540 B43]

459. Captain Edward Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 1 February 1807

Bristol 1 February 1807

Sir, In reply to your Letter of the 27th Ult (January) which I did not receive until yesterday respecting Henry Rowbotham, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore the 3rd November last by Lieutenant Williams, and was detained having served the sea for some years prior to the date of his indentures to ---- Bailling, Master of the West India Ship *Botsey* in November 1803. He is five feet seven inches high and has the appearance of being more than twenty years of age. He is a smart, active seaman, and perfectly fit his His Majesty's Service. A Person called on me some time after he was impressed to request his discharge, and gave me a private letter from Vice Admiral Stanhope (which came under cover to him) to the same effect. I told him that as Henry Rowbotham was[at sea before his indentures?] I had no power to comply with his request, and I should consider this a sufficient answer to the Vice Admiral's Letter, if he would have the goodness to say so in his answer.

Respecting the ill treatment he is said to have received on board the *Enchantress*, he denied ever having made such a representation, and acknowledges to have received all the indulgences he could expect as an impressed seaman. The *Cheerly* Gun brig is arrived from Plymouth for the new raised man. If the wind continues fair, he will be sent around tomorrow with the rest of the disposable men at this port.

Margin: send a copy of the letter to Adm Stanhope and acquaint him that their Lordships cannot admit of this man's discharge.

[Adm 1/1540 B44]

460. Captain Edward Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 9 February 1807

Bristol, 9 Feb 1807

Sir, Lieutenant Pearce, commander of His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*, having obtained permission from my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to retain the two men in lieu of those named in this margin (George Bradcock and James Crawly) as stated in your letter to him of the 27th Ult., I think it necessary I should report to you for their Lordships' information that George Bradcock was impressed on the 11 June last, but afterwards entered, and has been detained by Lieutenant Pearce from that time for the *Enchantress* without my knowledge, and when I discovered that he had not been sent round with the rest of the new raised men, I expressed my astonishment to Lieutenant Pearce at a repetition of such a proceeding (for he has done it in several instances before without the smallest regard to the manner in which the men have been obtained for the service) and ordered him to send the man to Plymouth the first opportunity. When they arrived the 31st with the supernumeraries, I repeated the order to Lieutenant Pearce for sending this man, but instead of his acquainting me that he had obtained their Lordships' sanction for keeping him, he told me he had discharged him by Pay Ticket. Having no reason for believing Lieutenant Pearce in anything he reports, I made further enquiry and found that the man was still in the *Enchantress* and was intended to be kept.

James Crawly was also impressed in Bristol on his way from Ireland to London but afterwards with seeming reluctance entered, and I have no doubt will desert the first opportunity. Lieutenant Pearce requested I would allow him to keep the man as his Clerk, but as there is a lad on board the *Enchantress* in that situation qualified for it, I refused it. I have the honor to be...George Barker.

Margin: direct Barker to go on board and muster her crew stating whether any other than these two men are improperly detained in the tender.

[Adm 1/1540 B45]

461. Captain Edward Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 22 February 1807

Bristol, 22 February 1807

Sir,

In reply to your Letter of yesterday's date directing the case of William Ferris to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that He was impressed by Lieutenant Williams on shore, the 19th Instant. He is twenty years of age and rated Ordinary. He was impressed on August last by Lieutenant Williams and discharged, his name appearing upon an Admiralty protection granted to the Brig *Mary* bound to Newfoundland, at which place on December last he was apprenticed to Patrick Dwyer, and is now detained having been at sea prior to the date of them.

Enclosure: Bristol, 24th February, 1807

Patrick Dwyer to William Marsden, Esquire,

Sir,

I beg leave to inform you that on 18th Instant the Office of the Impress Service Impressed into the Navy William Ferris, a youth of eighteen years of age, a near Relation of my own from on board the Brig *Mary* from Newfoundland, of which I

am Master. The said William Ferris is my apprentice, and being nearly allied to me I was taking great pains to qualify him for the command of the Vessel when out of his apprenticeship.

Captain Barker of the Impress Service refers me to you, saying there is much probability of the prayer of my request being granted. At present I have only my Mate on board to assist me. Soliciting your kind interference, I am with great respect, Sir, your most humble servant, Patrick Dwyer.

Margin: acquaint party applying that this man cannot be discharged unless proof produced that he had not been to sea for two years to be sworn before a judge or a commissioner of the court.

[Adm 1/1540 B47]

462. The case of James Callaghan, February–March 1807

The Humble Petition of Edward Callagan of the City of Kilkeeny, Soap Boiler and Tallow Chandler

Sheweth,

That your Memorialist was appointed Executor and Guardian to the Children of his late Brother James Callagan. That your memorialist bound one of the children of the said brother named James Callagan to the saddlery business. After the expiration of his time, your Memorialist sent him to London to have him improved in his trade. When he thought himself fully instructed & was on the way home to follow his Business, he having been left as much of money equal to it, that he was taken out of a Public House in Pill and put on board the *Enchantress* and afterwards sent on board his Majesty's Ship *Salvador del Mundo*, now lying at Plymouth. That by his being detained he will miss the only opportunity he could have in life, the Industry of his youth in his Business he having many friends to encourage him. Your Memorialist, willing to discharge the Trust reposed in him, doth humbly pray your Lordship will take a proper Substitute in his place and order the Substitute may be received by the regulating captain in Dublin or Waterford, and as in Duty Bound your Memorialist will every pray...

We the undersigned believe the above to be true and that the above named James Callagan never was at sea except on his passage from Ireland to England, Dated at Kilkenny, the 17th day of February, 1807...

2nd Enclosure: Lieutenant Williams to Captain Barker
Bristol March 13th 1807

Sir, In answer to yours of yesterday's date desiring me to state the case of the man named in the margin (James Callaghan) for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg leave to inform you that the Constable at Pill on the night of 23rd of November last sent to me on board His Majestie's Ship under my command for assistance to take two men which were breaking the peace. The master went and brought the two men. The other not being a fit person I discharged him again the next day. James Callaghan on the 25th Enter'd Voluntarily with me in the presence of the officers of this ship and being found by the surgeon a fit Person

I kept him. It did not strike me at the moment to give him Impressed Money and I forgot it afterwards,

I return to you Captain Loving's Letter, the above was the Man I wrote to you about on the 23rd November. I am Sir, your most obedient humble servant, Lieutenant Williams.

Margin: could not be discharged.

[Adm 1/1540 B 49, enclosures]

463. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 20 March 1807

Bristol March 20th 1807

Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 19th Instant directing the case of Francis Hellaer to be stated for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore by Lieutenant Williams on the 27th January last. He is thirty years of age, and rated ordinary. When he was impressed, he endeavoured to pass for an American Seaman, but it was clearly proved that he was born near Bristol. He has several relations in business here, but has no sort of connection with any Trade in America.

Enclosure:

His Majesties Gun Brig *Cheerly*, Plymouth, 17th March 1807

Sir,

I shall briefly take the liberty of stating my case to you for the consideration of their Lordships, trusting to their justice for my enlargement. I am a Native of England settled in Forto[Forteau] Bay in North America[Labrador] where I have a property in the fishery of that place consisting of two shallops and several smaller vessels. The cause of my coming to this Country was partly in commercial concerns of my own, but more particularly, for the recovery of my health, which was much impaired; the Truth of which, Mr. Biss of Bristol, coal merchant, can testify, as also will Lord Delaval (to whom I have the honor to be related) should you think it necessary to make application. I was impressed into His Majestys Service in Bristol and sent on board the *Enchantress*, from hence drafted on board the *Cheerly* Gun Brig for passage to Plymouth where I am this day arrived. I trust from the statement I have given, their Lordships will look to my situation as it is a great detriment and loss to me being withheld from my private affairs. I offer'd when before the regulating Captain of Bristol to find a substitute, or pay what expenses were necessary, tho' thoroughly convinc'd at the same time I am not subject to the predicament I am plac'd in.

Waiting their Lordships determination, I remain, your obedient servant, Francis Hellaer.

Margin: could not be discharged.

[Adm 1/1540 B51]

464. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 1 May 1807

*Bristol, 1 May 1807, regarding the case of Charles Evans impressed by Lieutenant Lucas on the 7 April “at which time he confessed that he had been five years at sea and that he came to Bristol to take command of a sloop. He is twenty four years of age, rated able, and has all the appearance of a seaman.”

Enclosure:

The humble Memorial of Charles Evans of the Town of Carmarthen
Sheweth,

That your Memorialist is a Freeholder of the County of Carmarthen in actual possession of an Estate of the annual value of Forty pounds and also a joint Proprietor with his Mother Jane Roberts (formerly Evans) widow, of a house situate in the Town of Carmarthen and benefited by him and his said mother as Licensed Victuallers by reason whereof your Memorialist most humbly submits to your Lordships that He is not subject or liable to be Impressed into or detained in His Majestie’s Service. But that notwithstanding what is above set forth your Memorialist hath been impressed and is now actually detained on board His Majestie’s Ship *Enchantress* now lying at Pill near the City of Bristol by which he hath sustained and is likely to sustain very considerable Loss and Damages unless forthwith relieved by your Lordships’ Interference.

Your Memorialist therefore most humbly prays that your Lordships will be pleased to give your directions to the Commander or Commanding Officer for the time being of His Majestie’s said Ship *Enchantress* for the liberation of your Memorialist from the said Detention and he is in Duty bound will ever pray &c

Charles Evans, April 20th 1807.

[Adm 1/1540 B54]

465. Lieutenant William Pearce to Captain George Barker, 2 May 1807

His Majestie’s Ship *Enchantress*, King Road Bristol, May 2d 1807,

Sir,

In answer to your Letter of this date directing me to State the Particular circumstances Under which James Callagan was received on board the *Enchantress*, I beg to acquaint you that on the Evening of the 23rd November last A constable at Pill came on board and requested I would take to Men who were fighting and making Great Disturbance in the Swan Inn at Pill. I accordingly sent a Party of Men with the Master Accompanied by the Constable who took up the Men and brought them on board. One of them, James Callaghan, being extremely drunk, was put below for the Night. In the Morning following the Surgeon represented him fit for the Service, when in the Presence of the Master and Midshipman I asked him if he would enter. He answered Yes, He was therefore sent to Plymouth in the *Hope* Tender, as a Volunteer Landman, where he now remains. It may be necessary to state that he never was in any period in the navy, or employed in the Sea Service. I am, Sir, &c William Pearce.

Margin: 4th May, since he volunteered, he could not be discharged

[Adm 1/1540 B55]

466. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 17 June 1807

Bristol, 17 June 1807.

Sir, Inclosed in a copy of my Letter to Lieutenant Pearce directing him to go on board the *Ann* Tender for a Passage to Plymouth in compliance with your Letter of the 9th Instant, which was delivered to him by Lieutenant Lucas under my orders, since which he has absconded from the *Enchantress*.

As there is no officer on board who could be trusted with the care of the ship, I have directed Lieutenant Richard Marmaduke of the Sea Fencibles to take charge of her till further orders.

[Adm 1/1540 B58]

467. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 20 June 1807

Sir,

Since my Letter to you of the 17th instant stating that Lieutenant Pearce had absconded from the *Enchantress*, I have discovered that he has assumed the name of John Smith and is residing with Mr. Chapman no 19 Russell Street, Greenland Dock, which I request you will make known to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

[Adm 1/1540 B59]

468. Lieutenant Lucas to Captain George Barker, 28 June 1807

Bristol, 28 June 1807 concerning Thomas Williams, impressed by Lieutenant Lucas on 26 June 1807 into the *Ann* tender. He had returned from the West Indies, was 19 years of age and rated able.

Enclosure: Bristol, 26 June 1807

Honourable Sir,

A lad named Thomas Williams about 19 years of age to who I am guardian having this morning been impressed in this Port by information made against him. I have to solicit the Honourable the Lords Commissioners to permit him to be liberated on such Terms as they may be pleased to judge proper under the circumstances of his case. This Lad has lately by the Death of a distant relative become entitled to a Landed Property of £50 or £60 per annum & it is necessary to establish that right, that he shall not be absent from the Kingdom an untenanted Period. Thus situat'd I shall hope that the Honourable Board will permit him to serve by substitute or in any other manner that they will be pleased to point out. I am Honorable Sirs, your obedient servant, James Matthews.

Margin: Could be discharged if he produced 2 able or 4 landsmen.

[Adm 1/1540 B60]

469. Captain George Barker to Benjamin Tucker, 12 July 1807

Bristol, 12 July 1807, concerning Edward White, impressed by Lt Lucas on 7th July. He was 22 years of age, rated able seaman.

Enclosure

The humble petition of Edward White, most humbly sheweth,

That your petitioner was impressed on the 7th July instant and is now on board His Majesty's ship *Enchantress* within the Port of Bristol. That your poor petitioner has for several years past been the sole support of an aged and infirm Mother, a sister and her child, as well a Brother in law named Nicholas Fitzgerald, who lost the use of his right arm in his Majesty's Ship *Achilles* in the action off Cape Trafalgar, and for which he receives no more than a pension of Eight Pounds per annum, which is not adequate to his Support.

Your petitioner, perceiving with deep sorrow that the Family who depended on him must become a burthen on the parish or starve, most humbly and earnestly prays your lordships to commiserate his case and the poor familys, and grant his liberation by finding a substitute or substitutes if your petitioner can, and your petitioner will not fail as in duty bound

Narrow Lewin's Mead, Bristol.

Margin: Could not allow his discharge.

[Adm 1/1540 B61]

***470. An old seaman impressed, mid-July 1807**

Bristol, 17 July 1807, concerning William Lawton, impressed by Lieutenant Williams 11 July on shore. "He is a perfect seaman, and states himself to be thirty nine years of age." Messrs. Prothero and Claxton applied for his discharge; Lawton came from the West Indies in their ship the *St Vincent*, Capt Bell, and was impressed. "He is nearly fifty years of age, has a wife & five children & has served in his Majesty's Ships ten years – six of which he was in the *Boadicea*, Captain Keates, & was discharged from the *Fury* Sloop of War, Capt Evans, at the last peace."

[Adm 1/1540 B62]

***471. Captain George Barker to William Wellesley Pole, Secretary to the Admiralty, 19 July 1807**

Bristol, 19 July 1807, Barker reported that when William Sutton was impressed by Lt Williams "he run from the Gang and was pursued some

distance before he was taken.” When he was examined, some people came to the rendezvous and said he was the master of the *Fair Hibernian* of Galway, “but the Man in Question did not even know where that vessel lay nor would they produce any document to prove him such. I have since learned that the master of the *Fair Hibernian* is O’Laughlan and that he was on board her in that situation when this man was impressed. He is thirty-nine years of age and a perfect seaman.”

Signed George Barker.

Enclosure:

To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

The Humble Petition of Martin Burke sheweth

That your petitioner is Owner of the *Fair Hibernian* of Galway now lying at Bristol, that the late Captain of the said Vessel by habitual Drunkenness and other gross misconduct constrained Your Petitioner to discharge him from the Command of the said Vessel to appoint William Sutton Captain thereof, your petitioner sheweth that William Sutton held the command of the *Hibernian* but 3 days, when he was Imprest into his Majestys Service & is now on board the Receiving Ship at Bristol. Your petitioner prayeth your Lordships will take the case into your consideration & order the discharge of Captain Sutton. Your Petitioner having taken this Journey to & remaining in London expressly on this business, the vessel being detained at Bristol waiting the result of your Lordships’ answer. Your Petitioner will wait at the Admiralty for the same from 4’o’clock pm.

Your Lordships most obedient servant, Martin Burke.

18th July 1807, Angel Inn, St Clements.

*Margin: Their lordships would not discharge him.

[Adm 1/1540 B64]

472. The case of George Hancock, shipwright, impressed in July 1807

Bristol, 17 July 1807

To the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

We take the liberty of applying to your Lordships for the discharge of Mr. George Hancock, Carpenter of our Ship *Ann*, 395 Tons now returned from Jamaica, who was impressed by HMS *Enchantress*, Lieutenant Pasley, while on his duty on board the Boat belonging to the above Ship between Kingroad & Bristol. He has a Wife & four small children who are entirely dependent upon him for support.

We have always been allowed a protection for our carpenters, under the confidence of which he was acting when impressed. We earnestly request this favor of his liberation otherwise we shall not be able to procure any carpenters who will venture to go to sea in our Ships from this port & on whom from the scarcity of other officers we a great deal rely,

We are your Lordship’s most obedient humble servant,

Braikenbridge and Hennywell.[Honnywell?]

Enclosure: Lieutenant Pasley to Captain Barker

HM Ship *Enchantress*, July 20th 1807

Sir, In answer to your Letter of yesterday's date Directing me to state the Case of Geo Hancock for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg leave to acquaint you that on the 15th instant I observed a Boat coming up the River with six men in her. I ordered her alongside and on examining the men I found four to be apprentices, the Master and George Hancock, who said he was Carpenter of the *Ann* but did nothing to show that he was so. I asked the Master of the *Ann* why did not leave his carpenter on board the ship. He told me he took him to bring the boat back after landing him, which I found was an untruth, for when I ordered the men out of the boat, I found he had part of his Cloaths with him and was going to remain on shore.

George Hancock is a shipwright by trade, aged 29 years, about 5 feet 10 inches high and had followed the sea these 7 Years.

I am, Sir, Jas. Pasley, Lieutenant and Commander.

Margin: Admiralty refused to discharge him.

[Adm 1/1540 B65]

473. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 22 July 1807

July 22nd 1807

Sir,

Having been informed that William Trathan belonging to the American frigate *United States* at Cowes is a British subject, I herewith state to you the particulars of his case for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Mr Hillhouse, a Shipbuilder at this Port, called on me yesterday and acquainted me that William Trathan served his apprenticeship to him, and that he was born in this Neighbourhood. That he sailed from Bristol in February last, carpenter of the *Euphrates* of Greenock, bound to Virginia, which ship he left on his arrival there and entered with others of her crew on board the *United States*. That since his return he has written to his Father who now lives at the Hot Wells informing him with the step he had taken desiring he would send such of his things as remained in his possession immediately to him, it being his intention to continue in the American service. As he has not particularized the Persons who entered him, I enclose a list of the Names of the Crew of the *Euphrates*, as entered at the Customs House, when she cleared out.

*The list describes William Trathan as the ship's carpenter, aged 27.

[Adm 1/1540 B60]

474. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 8 August 1807

Bristol, August 8th, 1807

Sir, In return to your letter of the 4th Inst. directing the case of Francis Morgan to be stated for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore by Lieutenant William on the 1st Inst. He came home in the *Hercules* from the West Indies in the last Fleet, in which ship he served as carpenter during the last two voyages. He served seven years to a shipwright at Swansea and has been at sea above three years. He is twenty-seven years of age and rated Ordinary.

Enclosure

Bristol August 2nd 1807

Sir,

Francis Morgan, a shipwright in our employ was last evening whilst on his lawful business impressed, and we this morning applied unsuccessfully to Captain Barker for his discharge. Under these circumstances, we have no alternative but addressing you to solicit that you will be pleased to represent the case to their Lordships, who we have no doubt will give you an order for the man's liberation, it having been always uncustomary to detain men of his description.

We have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obt. Humble servant,
Hillhouse and Sons, Co.

Margin: could not be discharged

[Adm 1/1540 B68]

475. Lieutenant Pasley to Captain Barker, 12 August 1807

To George Barker, Esquire, Regulating Captain at Bristol.
HMS *Enchantress*, August 12th, 1807

Sir,

In answer to your Letter of yesterday's date desiring me to report the case of Joseph Marchment, Carpenter, impressed by me. I have to inform you for their Lordships' Information that Joseph Marchment was sitting in the stern of the boat when I brought her too, & when I came to Question him he said he was Carpenter of the *John* and an apprentice to Mr. Sidman Tace, shipwright at Bristol. He having nothing to shew that he was Carpenter of the *John*, or an apprentice to Mr. Sidman Tace at Bristol, I kept him. Nor has there been any application made for him since I impressed him. He is aged 24 years, a shipwright by trade, and has been three different voyages to the West Indies in different ships.

I am, Sir, &c
Pasley, Lieutenant and Commander.

Enclosure:

To Hon. W.W. Pole,

Bristol, August 8th 1807

Joseph Marchment, Carpenter of the Ship *John*, belonging to John Maise, Esquire & Co, was impressed by Captain Pasley of H.M. Ship *Inchantress* from her boat when

coming up to Bristol on the ship's duty with Capt Pritchard. Humbly conceives that he should be discharged, but if that is impossible will find a substitute.

Phebe Marchmont.

Margin: could not be discharged.

[[Adm 1/1540 B70]

476. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 23 August 1807

Bristol August 23rd, 1807

Sir, In return to your letter of the 22nd Inst. directing the case of Henry Burton, an Apprentice to be stated for the Information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he entered with Lieutenant Lucas on the 25th Instant. He is a boy, sixteen years of age, and now on his passage to Plymouth in the *Ann Tender*.

Enclosure:

The Humble Petition of Michael Hayman of the Parish of Clifton in the County of Gloucester, Tyler, Plasterer and House Painter.

Sheweth,

That by an Indenture of Apprenticeship dated the sixteenth Day of June One thousand eight hundred and six, Henry Burton, son of Richard Burton of the said parish of Clifton, labourer, did put himself apprentice to your petitioner to serve him from the date thereof for the Term of Seven Years, but no Premium or Fee was paid to your Petitioner with the said Apprentice.

That the said Apprentice served your Petitioner as such apprentice from the date of the said Indenture up to the twenty fourth day of July last, on which day he entered himself to serve in his Majesty's Navy and is now on Board of his Majesty's Sloop of War *Enchantress*, now lying in Kingroad within the Port of Bristol.

That your petitioner lately applied to Captain Barker, regulating Captain of the Impress Service at the Port of Bristol to have the said apprentice delivered up to him, and at the same time produced the said Indenture which Captain Barker conceived to be void for two reasons, first because the Apprentice's Father was not made a party to the said indenture, and secondly because the Indenture was not enrolled in his Majesty's Stamp Office agreeable to the Act of Parliament.

That your Petitioner is advised by his Solicitor that such Indenture is a good and valid Indenture and is not void for the above mentioned Reasons for that it was not necessary that the Father should execute the same nor that it should be enrolled in the Stamp Office to make it valid.

Your Petitioner most humbly prays your Honor will be pleased to send on Order of your Honorable Board to Captain Barker directing him to deliver up the said Apprentice to your Petitioner.

And your Petitioner will ever pray &c Michael Hayman

Margin: Henry Burton to be discharged once expenses paid to the regulating officer.

[Adm 1/1540 B72]

477. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 20 September 1807

Bristol, September 20th 1807

Sir,

Underneath is a Return of the Sea Fencibles enrolled in the Severn District under my command. I have the honor to be, &c George Barker

Bristol 90; Pill 250; Gloucester 57; Berkeley 50; Frampton 24; Minsterworth 17; Tewkesbury 26; Tivenham 32; Brockware[Brockweir] 63; Newnham 32 Total 641.

[Adm 1/1540 B75]

478. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 4 November 1807

Bristol November 4th 1807

In return to your letter of yesterday's date directing the case of William Hewitt to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed by Lieutenant Lucas on the 1st Inst. on board the *Eliza* West Indiaman. It appears upon my investigation of this case that John Irving the subscriber to the letter herewith returned, has been several years Master of the *Eliza*, and performed the last voyage in that situation, and even now confesses he may go out on the present voyage. The Man in question tells me that he understood from Mr. Irving that it was so intended. Under those circumstances I have no doubt but this plan, which is not unusual of going through the necessary formalities at the Custom House, has been done to screen Wm Hewitt from the Impress till the ship was finally cleared out, and I am strengthened in this opinion from his youth and general appearance being so unlike People in that Situation. He is twenty years of age and rated Able.

Enclosure

Bristol 2nd November, 1807,

Sir,

We take the liberty of addressing you respecting the Chief Mate of our Ship *Eliza* who was impressed this morning. His name is William Hewitt. He has signed the necessary bonds at the Customs House as Chief Mate & has receipts for the Cargo, which is nearly all on board. We apprehend that the Impress Office conceived that John Irving, the Senior of our firm, was really the Captain, but we can appeal to the register to prove that Joseph Stephenson is the Captain & we can prove that he has acted as Captain in every respect.

It will be a very serious inconvenience to us if the Lords of the Admiralty will not allow Mr. William Hewitt to be delivered up, as the principal part of the cargo has been taken in, the vessel fitted under his direction.

We have the honor to be, &c John Irving and Co.

Margin: their Lordships see no grounds for allowing his discharge.

[Adm 1/1540 B79]

479. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 5 November 1807

Bristol November 5th 1807

Sir,

In return to your letter of 3rd Inst. stating that by a report of survey held at Plymouth on the men named in the Margin hereof received from this rendezvous, it appears that three of them are unserviceable, and the other two overcharged for slops, and directing me to account for the same, I beg to submit that the first man in question, Thomas Griffiths, being an impressed man, and sent against his inclination, his complaints should be received with the greatest caution, for I have invariably found men so obtained for the service endeavor by every stratagem in their power to impose. The two last are Volunteers[James Bryant and James Waist] and being desirous at first to get into the service would naturally conceal their ailments, if any existed, and I trust their Lordships will allow that those complained of are of that nature that would baffle the skill of any professional man when the parties are so inclined. Those Persons were examined in my presence by Mr Drew, a navy surgeon of long practice and reported by him to me, as being sound and fit for His Majesty's Service.

They have been also regularly mustered daily on board the *Enchantress* at nine o'clock in the morning and examined by the surgeon of that ship without any complaint being made by them, and I am really very sorry after the particular attention I have uniformly paid to the cases of men brought before me, that there should on their final examination be any found defective. Respecting the cloathing of the new raised men, they are supplied with slops on board the receiving ship, and not at the rendezvous, and every Sunday morning their cloaths are mustered in order to see that their slop cloathing has not been lost, or disposed of, as well as to see that they are clean in their Persons, and when they are discharged to the Tender for a conveying to Plymouth each man's charge has been always read to him on board the *Enchantress*, distinguishing each article, and on board the Tender before the receipt has been given to them, so that I am at a loss to know how James Bryant could be charged with things that he has not received, but it appears that more has been issued than were absolutely necessary, and I have in consequence directed Lieutenant Pasley not to issue any in future without an order from me. James Waist has also had a shirt and trowsers unnecessarily, and if his things have been lost, it must have happened on the passage to Plymouth, which I cannot reply to, as the *Ann* Tender is not returned.

Margin: send copy to Admiral Young for his information

[Adm 1/1540 B79a]

480. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 4 November 1807

Bristol, November 4th 1807

Sir,

In return to your letter of the 2nd Inst. directing the case of Jonathan Lewis, Mate of the Assistance, to be stated for the Information of my Lords of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore by Lieutenant Lucas on the 31st

Ult.[October] at which time he was roving about the Quay on the opposite side of the River from his vessel, and on shore without leave of his Master. He is twenty nine years of age, has been at sea fourteen years, and is rated able.

Enclosure

Bristol, October 31st 1807

To the Honourable Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty,

My Lords,

On the 23 Inst. we loaded herrings at Allonby in the County of Cumberland[cleared] from the Custom house[at] Workington bound for Bristol to which we came on the 29th inst. and not finding a proper place to discharge as yet, I this day being on shore upon the account of seeing a friend was stoped by the press, being mate of the Sloop *Assistance*, Wm Beeby, Master, burthen 63 tons per register and only yet discharged 2 Barrels. I have a Wife and 3 small children. I have the account of the cargo, the Captain being sick when taken on board, and likewise a legal protection. I therefore commit myself to your Lordships' mercy.

Jonathan Lewis.

This Man has been Mate of the above Vessel twelve Months. I am past Owner and he is consigned to me with the Herrings on board. She is a fishing sloop. The Man was within sight of her on the Quay when he was pressed. John Thomas, Bridge Parade, Bristol.

Margin: Admiralty would not consent to his discharge.

[Adm 1/1540 B80]

481. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 7 November 1807

Bristol, November 7th 1807.

Sir,

In return to your letter of yesterday's date directing the case of John Lewis to be stated for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore the 2nd inst. by Lieutenant Lucas. He is twenty years of age, and rated Ordinary.

Enclosure:

To the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

The Humble Petition of Ann Lewis of the City of Bristol.

Sheweth,

That your petitioner's Husband now lays dangerously ill in the Infirmary of this City having lately suffered amputation of one of his legs – and that the only support of your petitioner and her Husband has been expectant upon our only son. That your petitioner's said son has only been at sea about twenty-seven months, and has been just impressed and now on board the Tender lying in Bristol river.

Margin: discharge denied

[Adm 1/1540 B82]

482. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 16 December 1807

Bristol, December 16th 1807

Inclosed is a Letter I have received from Mr Samuel Martin, Solicitor to the owners of ships employed in the fishery at the Port of Bristol, stating that Mr Gilden, owner of the *Aurora*, intends to bring an action against me for impressing William Gregory unless his discharge is ordered. I have stated in my report of the 2nd Inst. to Mr Barrow upon the case of this Man that he did not belong to any ship at the time he was impressed, but that he was engaged to go Mate of the Margaret then discharging wine from Oporto, and bound to any Port they could get a freight for, the Master of which ship has since confessed to me in the presence of Lieutenant Lucas that the man in question actually belonged to her at the time he was impressed, that he had shipt him knowing him to be a steady man. It is further confirmed[?] by his cloaths being taken out of Mr Lieutenant Lucas's gang when he was sent down to the *Enchantress*. I have acknowledged the receipt of Mr Martin's letter and acquainted him that he should transmit it for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Enclosure:

Hull, 15th December 1807

Sir, Mr Gilden, the acting owner of the Greenland ship *Aurora* of this port having been informed you had impressed William Gregory protected from the impress as a linemanager of that ship, hath directed me to apply to you for his discharge and in expectation of you being induced to grant it without obliging Mr Gilden to pursue legal measures to accomplish it. I take leave to state to you that Gregory, having given the requested security to the Officers of the Customs here to proceed in the *Aurora* to the fishery the ensuing season, is by the Act of the 26 & 35 of his present Majesty (continued by several subsequent acts) entitled to protection from the impress so long as he continues on shore or employed in the coasting trade – and Gregory being on shore when he was impressed comes directly within the meaning and spirit of the Acts of Parliament which were made for the encouragement of the Whale fisheries and for the protection of the men employed therein.

From the great national important which the whale fishery is considered by the Legislation as a nursery for seamen and the difficulty of procuring the necessary number of men to sail therein, you must be sensible of the absolute necessity that the Owners of the Greenland ships should see the protecting given them be enforced in the strictest degree, and therefore cannot be surprized when I inform you that it is Mr Gilden's fixed resolution to bring an action against you unless Wm Gregory is discharged.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

William Martin, Solicitor to the owners of the Ships employed in the Fisherys at the Port of Hull.

Margin: 17th Dec. Refer it to Mr Bicknell[Admiralty Solicitor] for his consideration.

[Adm 1/1540 B86]

483. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 22 December 1807

Bristol, December 22nd 1807,

Sir,

In return to your letter of the 29th Inst. directing me to report to you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty upon the propriety of increasing the complement of the *Enchantress* as requested by Lieutenant Pasley, I beg to acquaint you that having mustered the crew and enquired into the grounds of the request, I am of opinion that four ordinary seamen should be added to her present establishment. There is at present a Clerk and a Purser's steward borne, the latter may be discharged to[from] the ships company, the Clerk is fully equal to the performance of both duties, where there is so little to do. I see no reason for boys being borne as part of the compli[e]ment for the purpose of waiting upon officers, as there are always some on board who are supernumerary, but I submit to their Lordships' judgment the propriety of giving the rating of Boatswain's Mate to a Person who performs that duty, as the man Lieutenant Pasley is desirous of giving such encouragement appears not to deserve it. J Gilmore, the last named person on Lieutenant Pasley's list of the seamen borne, is a young Gentleman. He is a Boy of fifteen years of age, rated Able, and has been received on board for the purpose of carrying on his[service?]. I think it my duty to report to you a proceeding so irregular for their Lordships' information.

Margin: Lieutenant Pasley to be empowered to have an addition of four Ordinary seamen, and to rate one of the crew as Boatswain's Mate.

[Adm 1/1540 B87]

484. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 27 December 1807

Bristol December 27th 1807

Sir,

Captain Crawley, having stated to me that there are Ten black men, French prisoners of war in his charge at Stapleton, who are desirous of entering for his Majesty's Navy, I beg to know whether the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty approve of my receiving them.

Margin: direct him to report whether they are fit for His Majesty's Service.

[Adm 1/1540 B89]

485. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 28 December 1807

Bristol, December 28th 1807

Sir, Inclosed is Lieutenant Pasley's report on the case of John Richardson, as directed in your Letter of the 26th Inst.

Enclosure:

HM Ship *Enchantress*,
27th December 1807

Sir,

In answer to your letter of this date directing the case of John Richardson to be stated for the Information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed by me on the 27th of last Month at Pill. He came home a few days before in the *Alexander* of Liverpool from Jamaica. He is an able seaman about forty four years of age, and has entered for the *Enchantress* since his application to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for his discharge.

I am Sir, &c Pasley, Lieutenant and Commander.

Enclosure:

HMS *Enchantress*, Bristol 9th December, 1807

Honorable Sir,

I beg the favour you will lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty my case. I have been Imprest into His Majesty's Service by Lieutenant Pasley, Commanding His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* on this Station, notwithstanding I am 53 years of age and have a wife and 8 children, which is a Large family to support. I never served before the Mast these 20 years & upwards and have been either Master or Mate since. I should have continued in my former Station, but the Merchants and I could not agree about the wages and I been anxious to get home to my Family induced me to ship myself before the Mast in the *Alexander* belonging to Liverpool, Capt. Smith. We were drove in her in distress. I hope my Lords will take my Case into their Consideration & will give orders for my Discharge. For the truth of this I beg leave to refer to Captain Smith and the Merchants of Liverpool who can testify what I have inserted above.

I am, Honourable Sir, &c John Richardson.

[Adm 1/1540 B 90]

486. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 30 December 1807

Bristol December 30th 1807

Sir, In return to your Letter of the 28th inst. I beg to acquaint you that I have examined the men in question at Stapleton Prison with the assistance of the Naval Surgeon employed there, and find that there are eight black men, and men of colour who are sound and fit for his Majesty's Service. The four men named in the margin are white men and fit for the service. They came home in the last Jamaican Fleet, and were sent to the prison on their arrival. They are very desirous of entering for His Majesty's Service.

[the 4 men in the margin. Juan Antonio, Jean Guston from Newfoundland, Peter Thompson and John Frederick, both from New Orleans.]

[Adm 1/1540 B91]

***487. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 21 June 1808**

Barker informed the Admiralty that he had impressed John Grey, carpenter, at the request of the captain of the ship in which he returned. "By request of the captain of the Ship he came home in for his ill usage to the Mate, and threats to the Captain, of cutting him down with an axe, if he interfered on behalf of the Mate." Barker said he was 'a young able bodied Man' aged 27, a native of Dundee, who had made 2 voyages to the West Indies out of Bristol. The man who applied to the Admiralty for his discharge was a publican and a crimp living in Bedminster. He, James White, came on board and impersonated Grey's father. Barker thought Grey a troublemaker, for the day he was aboard the *Enchantress*, (Barker's ship) the Master desired him to open his chest of clothes. "He was very insolent to him and when he got in the waist²² he swore he be D—d if he would not make Mr Harris pay for it as he did not belong to the ship, for which insolence he is now in Confinement." The memorial/petition was from James Grey, who said that John was a carpenter and had never been to sea previous to his recent voyage to the West Indies. He had been originally cleared by the captain of the *Severn* and only impressed when he fell out with the mate.

***488. A drunken lieutenant, June 1808**

Barker asked that Lieut Jonathan Lucas be superseded since he had been frequently "intoxicated with Liquor during the time he has been under my command, particularly this morning, so much so, as to be incapable of attending to his duty, and as his propensity to drinking is so great as to leave no hope of his getting the better of it," he recommended he be discharged from this duty.

[Adm 1/1542, 27 June 1808]

***489. The impressment of James Blew, mate and mason**

Barker said James Blew was a very fine man of 20 years of age and for 10 months the mate of the *Francis and Henry* of Newport. He had been impressed while serving as a seaman aboard the *Heart of Oak* taking a cargo of iron to Bristol. Barker said that contrary to the petition in his favour, dated 25 June 1808, he had not been active in the masonry business for two years, nor employed to select stones as represented. The petition came from the rector, church wardens and overseer of Huntspill, Somerset, which said that James Blew followed his father's trade of masonry and worked for his father for the last five years, which kept his sister at school and contributed to the welfare of his mother. He was appointed to select stones for buildings from Newport, a port opposite Huntspill across the Severn, when he was impressed. Parish authorities obviously keen to have Blew released as he was supporting his parents.

[Adm 1/1542, 30 June 1808]

²² The middle part of the ship between the forecaskle and the quarter-deck.

***490. The Impressment of Thomas Philips, journeyman cooper, 1795, 1808**

Thomas Philips petitioned for his release “having been informed against by the Journeymen Coopers who are combined together in this City against the Masters for raising their Wages in consequence of my continuing to Work and not joining them in their association.” Phillips said he had been impressed in August 1795 coming from a French prison and remained on board HM *Powerful* until March 1800 when the ship was laid up at Chatham. He was then drafted to HM *America* and remained in her until 31 Dec 1800 when the ship was cast away in the West Indies. He was then put on board the *Hinde* frigate for Halifax and from her to the *Albion* and remained in her until the Peace. He had never received a discharge, nor indeed a bounty and ‘then enjoyed but a very indifferent State of health otherwise no one would serve their King and Country with greater pleasure.’ Early in 1808 he was drawn in the militia and paid a fine of £20.

Various merchants and traders of Bristol, including Samuel Birch, the current Mayor, testified to his ‘deserving character’ and as “one that has acted meritoriously in opposing his fellow Workmen in Combinations”.

[Adm 1/1542, 8 October 1808]

***491. The case of John Pearce, mason, Moncton Combe, July 1808**

The parish officers of Moncton Combe, Somerset, claimed that in the month of July 1808, John Pearce, a mason of the parish “having been by reason of domestic uneasiness & private misfortunes induced to a desponding state of mind, did in a moment of desperation abandon a Wife and two small children & enter as a Seaman on aboard one of his Majesty’s ships lying at Bristol, from whence he has been removed to and is now serving on Board the *Resolute* Ship of War at Plymouth.” Pearce now wanted to return to his family and his health was failing as a result of an old eye complaint. The parish authorities thought “the country as well as the unfortunate family of the Individual” would be better served if he were allowed to return to work as a mason. The parish authorities offered a substitute.

[Adm 1/1542, 9 November 1808]

***492. The petition of Samuel Lightfoot, master cooper, 9 November 1808**

Samuel Lightfoot of Liverpool said he had apprenticed Thomas Edwards 15 April 1805 for a term of 7 years and just “when his Services were beginning to be useful,” Edwards deserted him. Edwards, he discovered, enrolled on the *Eliza* bound for Africa and Barbados and on his return home switched ships to the *Richard*. This ship was leaky, she went to Bristol, but there Lightfoot was impressed and sent to Plymouth. Lightfoot desired that “nothing but that Justice which is due from Man to Man agreeable to the

established Laws of his Country” and requested that Edwards be returned that he might serve out his term.

[Adm 1/1542, 9 November 1808]

493. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 4 February 1809

Bristol February 4th 1809

Sir,

In reply to your Letter of yesterday’s date, directing the case of the Men named in the margin[Isaac Aisment, able seaman, 24 years of age; Peter Doyle, able seaman, 25 years of age]...I beg to acquaint you that they were impressed on shore the 2nd Instant by Lieutenant Williams under my orders, at which time they were lolling about the streets.

Enclosure: To the Lords of the Admiralty, Bristol 2nd Feb. 1809

My Lords,

We obtained from your Lordships a Protection dated the 29 November last for Five Men employed in navigating the Schooner,[Captain] Bickle, from St Johns to this Port, Men articted to Perker Kings & Bulley of St Johns, owners of the said schooner & employed in the said Vessel in the Sea Fishery, sent here in consequence of their Brig *Lovely* being lost going to Quebec. Two of these men, Isaac Aisment and Peter Doyle, are pressed, being on Shore, and we have applied to Captain Barker to release them who refers us to your Lordships.

We cannot procure such Men here & therefore pray your Lordships will be pleased to direct Captain Barker to give them up, for we are very anxious to send the Vessel back or she will be too late for the Fishery & without these two Men are given up, she must lose the Voyage, which will be a very great Injury to the owners of the said Schooner & the Trade of Newfoundland. We pray your Lordships early answer & have the honor to be,

Your Lordships’ most obedient servants, William Gibbons, & Co.

[Adm 1/1545 B14]

494. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 8 February 1809

Bristol, 8th Feb 1809

In reply to your letter of the 5th instant, directing the case of Alexander Whyte to be stated for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore by Lieutenant Dillon under my orders on the 3rd Instant, at which time he had no document about him to prove that he was Mate of a Vessel, nor was he employed in the service of the vessel he is stated to belong to. He is an able seaman, twenty-four years of age.

Enclosure:

The *Glasgow* at Bristol, 5th February 1809

Sir, Please to have the Goodness to lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of my mate Alex. Whyte. He was impressed at Bristol the 3rd Instant when on shore about 90 yards from the vessel and then on the Ship's Duty. Hop[e]s there Lordships will be at the trouble to consider his case as I have complied with all the forms that the Law directs Relitive (sic) to him being Protected as mate from the impress, and have delivered his Protection to the Regulating Captain at Bristol where the vessel is nearly loaded and bound for Glasgow. Hope you will indulge me with his Discharge. The vessel is sixty three tons Per Register.

Sir, your Very humble servant, John White, Master.

Margin: cannot be granted

[Adm 1/1545 B 17]

495. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 15 February 1809

Bristol, 15 Feb 1809

Sir, In compliance with your letter of 9th instant I have sent to Bradford for the Boys therein mentioned, but instead of them being Ten or Twelve in number of the second and third classes collected in the division of Trowbridge as stated in Mr. Langford's Letter, there were only five to be found, and none fit for the service, one having a very bad leg, and the others are under thirteen years of age, and very small. I have the honor to be, Sir, &c George Barker

[Adm 1/1545 B18]

496. The case of John Newton, second mate of a brig, February 1809

Bristol, 16 February 1809

Sir,

In return to your Letter of yesterday, directing the case of John Newton to be stated for the Information of the...Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore the 13th instant by Lieutenant Williams under my orders, at which time he stated that he was going for his linen. He is twenty-two years of age, rated able, and understands navigation.

I have the honor to be,...George Barker

Enclosure:

Bristol 14th Feb 1809

Honorable Sirs,

I trust to your accustomed affability and liberality in excusing the liberty and trouble in thus petitioning you in behalf of a young Lad without a Friend capable of assisting him but myself.

His name is John Newton, 22 years of age only, was the second mate of the Brig, *Teresa*, Capt. Keehoe, bound to the Brazils, and sailed from hence abt three weeks ago, but unfortunately the late tremendous gales had nearly destroyed her, which caused her to sail back here, unload her Cargo, is now under repairs and will again sail upon the same Voyage as soon as[he is] ready and a fair wind. The said Captain has a 3 mos ship's protection for the whole of his crew which expires the 22nd of this month, but upon the Lad going to the Post Office last evening with Letters from his Captain by his special commands & orders (consequently in the service of the ship) his Majesty's officers in the impress service belonging to this Port press'd him, & it is impossible Captain Barker says for him to clear the Lad without your concurrence.

The facts are briefly these. The said Lad has only been three years at Sea as my apprentice, bound at the Custom House here to serve on board the Ship *Rossetti* partly belonging to me, therefore he cannot be by any means considered as a thorough Seaman, but one of the owners of the *Teresa* ship being an intimate friend of mine, he consented to take him in such capacity as second mate, foregoing the disadvantage he labour'd under in deficiency of Seamanship, to the lad's promotion under my recommendation, indeed, to serve both. I shall not trouble your lordship further then to say the lad was born of respectable parents, but alas for him, they are no more, nor has he a Friend in the World today – "Jack here is a shilling for thee" – but myself, and when I say I have already advanced him abt. £70, & my circumstances but very middling, I cannot but think that I have befriended him, tho I trust my Wife and Family will never feel the want of it. Therefore if your lordships will now have the goodness to stand his Friend also in distress, by taking the necessary steps for his discharge, he will ever feel and acknowledge it with gratitude, as well as I, honourable sirs, your most obedient servant, James Mason.

PS if not intruding too far, I request the favour of an answer as speedy as possible, fearing that the Lad may either be sent away, or that the *Teresa* may sail when he would thereby lose his situation.

Margin: petition cannot be granted

[Adm 1/1545 B19]

497. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 2 April 1809

Bristol, 2 April 1809

In return to your letter of yesterday directing the case of James John to be stated for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore the 9th instant by Lieutenant Dillon under my orders, at which time he was lolling about the streets and had no document about him to prove that he was mate of a vessel. He is twenty six years of age and rated able.

Enclosed:

The Humble Petition of James John mariner sheweth that he was on shore on the ship's service at Bristol called the *Peace and Plenty* of Carmarthen when he was prest on the 9th of this month having a wife and four small children and his wife pregnant and near her time, that he is unable to get a substitute and has nothing to

maintain his wife and family but his labour. We, the Minister, Churchwardens and Justices of this parish to which he belong[s] humble pray your lordships to take his case into consideration and have compassion on his poor family by your goodness to let him return to his service in the sloop *Peace and Plenty* and your poor petitioner is in duty bound , will ever pray, 27 March 1809,[signed] David Jones, master of sloop *Peace and Plenty*, Morgan Lewis, owner of said ship. Llanstephan, county of Carmarthen, John Thomas, churchwarden, William James, merchant, Llanstephan, Thomas Roberts, merchant, Llanstephan, Rees Llewellyn, clerk to Mr Woods Addy, JP, Carmarthen.

Margin: petition granted

[Adm 1/1545 B27, B32, B33]

498. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 24 May 1809

Bristol, 24th May 1809,

Sir,

In reply to your letter of yesterday directing the case of Richard Bland alias Bruce to be stated for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he entered with Lieutenant Williams under my orders on the 1st May as a substitute for Thomas Ayliffe. He is a landman, twenty two years of age.

Enclosed: The Humble Petition of Richard Bland, of Raquet Court, Fleet Street, Attorney at Law and Solicitor, sheweth,

That about three weeks ago Richard Bland the younger, a nephew of your petitioner, left his friends & has since been discovered on board His Majesties Ship of War the HMS *Enchantress*, now lying in King's Road near Bristol, but by what means he went on board your petitioner is not informed.

That the said Richard Bland is on board the said ship by the name of Richard Bruce which he hath taken, & that he never was at sea before nor has he ever been accustomed to any other mode of living but as other young men of respectable friends and parents.

That your petitioner put him to school when an infant, brought him up at his own expense & articulated him, & he is now admitted as an attorney on the Rolls of his Majesty's Court of Kings Bench, but he cannot practice until his fees for admission are paid which was intended to be done by your petitioner when he was thought competent to act for himself.

That your Petitioner is informed that the said ship *Enchantress* is daily expected to be ordered to sail for Plymouth from thence on Foreign Service.

Your petitioner must humbly prays that the said ship may not sail from Kings Road until the said Richard Bruce is restored to his Friends if practicable, & on what terms that can be done.

And your petitioner shall ever pray &c

[Adm 1/1545 B34]

499. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 26 May 1809

Bristol 26 May 1809

In relation to your letter of yesterday directing the case of George Buck on board the *Milford* to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore the 21st of February last by Lieutenant Dillon under my orders. He is an able seaman, twenty years of age.

I have reason to believe that this seaman deserted from the *Confiance* above two years ago.

Enclosure: To the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of HM Navy Frances Buck, mother of George Buck, who was empress (impressed) in Bristol about three months back and sent on board HM ship *Milford* and he being the only means of sup[p]ort this poor petitioner had, who is now so old and feeble as to require help to dress and undress herself.

Most humbly prayeth you may be please to admit her liberty to find substitutes to serve in his place and to let her know how many will be required and the time you will please to allow to find the substitutes for which as in Duty bound &c

Frances Buck, 20 May 1809, Bristol

*Letter of George Buck, senior, 32 Corn Street, Bristol,
4 March 1809.

His son was 22 years of age and had been “constantly employed under his father in his skiff and boats in the Bristol river and channel. He was impressed on 21 February and sent on board HM *Enchantress*, lying in this port. His son and other children were barely sufficient to navigate the skiff for the sole purpose of piloting vessels to and from this port.” Buck had for many years been a branch pilot and at various points had piloted HM ships coming to Bristol. With the impressment of his son he would be unable to continue “in the execution of my duty” and this would prove “of serious injury to myself and family, having no other dependence for support but by my children’s assistance in navigating my skiff.” He applied to Barker, who could not release him without HM orders. George Buck hoped their Lordships would oblige, and “although his means were small, he would find a substitute.”

Margin: Their Lordships would not discharge George Buck, junior, because of the desertion.

[Adm 1/1545 B35]

500. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 28 May 1809

Bristol, 28 May, 1809

In return to your letter of yesterday directing the case of Mathew Pike to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you

that he was impressed on shore the 25 May by Lieutenant Dillon under my orders. He is twenty years of age, and an able seaman.

Enclosure

The petition of Mary Pike most humbly sheweth

That her son Matthew Pike, who hath obtained his twentieth year of age, was impressed on yesterday and is now aboard the Tender. Your Lordships' petitioner begs leave to submit that under such circumstances she doth intreat their Lordships to grant his discharge on such terms as they may be pleased to point out. Yet altho' your petitioner hath three small children to support she will endeavour to raise a Friend to secure two good and sufficient Landsmen in his stead to be approved by Captain Barker, the Regulating Officer for the Port of Bristol. Should you Lordships petitioner be indulged with this, She will have great cause to be thankful.

8 Redcliff Hill, Bristol, 24 May 1809, signed Mary Pike.

[Adm 1/1545 B36]

501. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 23 June 1809

Bristol, 23 June 1809

In reply to your letter of 21 June directing the case of George Scott on board the *Enchantress* to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was sent to me on 7 May by the civil power. He is twenty years of age, and rated Landman.

Enclosure: Hambrook, near Bristol, 20 June 1809

Honoured Sir,

I humbly beg the favour of you to state to the Lords Commissioner of the Admiralty the case of my son, George Scott. He is a young men of 22 years of age and entered at Bristol to serve in the navy about the 4th May last, and is at present on board his Majesties Ship *Enchantress*. He was a great support to me and his aged mother, and is very sorry for his entering on Board a Ship. Hopes their Lordships will allow me to procure a substitute or substitutes to serve in his Place. Honoured Sir, Your very humble servant, James Scott.

[Adm 1/1545 B39]

502. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 21 July 1809

Bristol 21 July 1809

George Barker gave a report on John Davis, impressed by Lieutenant Pasley and then on board HMS *Enchantress*

Enclosure: Honourable Sirs,

My son, John Davis, ordinary seaman, sailed out of the Port of Bristol in the *Ulysses*

merchant ship to the Leeward Islands: on their Return to this Port last Thursday he was pressed and put on board the *Enchantress* Tender: as he is in a very weak state, having had the Fever & Ague three months from which he is now slowly recovering, as I am an aged Widow intirely dependent on my son for support and am fearful his present confinement will prove fatal to him, I must humbly intreat you your king interest and favour In granting me his Discharge, and I will with the assistance of a few Friends who knows my distress obtain two substitutes in his Room who shall meet the approbation of the Regulating Captain here. Your kind attention to my request and Favourable and speedy reply will ever oblige and serve your most afflicted and truly distressed servant.

Catharine Davis[her mark]

Please to direct for me No 2 Pimms Court, Marsh Street, Bristol, 17 July 1809

[Adm 1/1545 B43]

503. Captain George Barker to W.W. Pole, 6 August 1809

Bristol 6 August 1809

In return to your letter of yesterday directing the case of John Phillips to be stated for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed by Lieutenant Turner commanding the *Ann* Tender from the *Ulysses* lately arrived from the West Indies. This man was impressed at Bristol three years ago, and liberated by my order, having at that time a regular certificate of his citizenship, and recollecting his Person again with the strongest reasons for believing him to be an American, I ordered his discharge on the 5th instant.

Enclosure: John Jones of Bristol mariner verily maketh oath that he well knew John Phillips, who was lately Impressed from on board the *Ulysses*, Captain Butters, on her voyage from the West Indies to this port and further that he knew the said John Phillips in America as well as his Mother & Brother upwards of Ten years ago, and always understood that he was a Citizen of the United States of America. He further swears that he was with him when he lost his American protection by his Jacket being wash'd overboard from the *Jamaica*, Captain Walker of this Port about two years since.

*Further affidavit by John Jones and Philip Bevan, reiterating the above facts with Bevan testifying that "he has frequently seen the protection of John Phillips & has cleared him from the Impress by it more than once." Sworn 31 July 1809

[Adm 1/1545 B48]

504. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, Admiralty Office, 20 August 1809

Bristol 20th August 1809

In return to your letter of the 18th instant directing the cases of the two boys named in the margin to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that they were taken before the Mayor of this City on the 26th June last, charged with throwing stones at People that were passing in boats upon the River, a practice that has become so notorious of late by gangs of boys, and so many applications have been made in consequence to the Magistrates for relief, that they have found it necessary to make an example.

*They were accordingly put on board the *Ann* tender for Plymouth on Barker's orders.

Enclosure: To John Barrow, Admiralty Office, London

The Humble Petition of James and Susannah Gee, of the Parish of Temple, City Bristol, 16 August 1809

That their sons James Gee, aged 13 years and Elijah Gee, aged 11 years, as they were amusing themselves Playing on the new River Bristol about six weeks Back with several other Lads, a Person who owed me a grudge got an officer to take them up and they were both put on board the *Enchantress* Man of War and they are now sent round to Plymouth. The other Lads taken in company with them are all discharged. We, their afflicted father and mother, most humbly Intreat your lordships to grant them a discharge and restore them to their afflicted parents in compassion to their youth and Inexperience as they have committed no Crime But what the Natural Playfulness of youth may excuse, your kind attention to our anxious request will ever be considered and acknowledged as the highest obligation by your most distressed Petitioners, James and Susannah Gee, living in Temple Backs.

[Adm 1/1545 (George Barker) 20 August 1809]

505. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, 2nd secretary to the Admiralty, 8 March 1710

Sir, In reply to your letter of yesterday directing the case of Charles Purnell, Mate of the *Harriet* on board the *Enchantress* to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore on the 5th instant (going into the Playhouse) by Lieutenant Dillon under my orders. He is twenty-two years of age, and rated able. The small remains of the ships cargo is now discharging, and she is laying with a Broom at the Masthead for sale. I have the honor to be....G Barker.

Enclosure: Charles Purnell, Chief Mate of the *Harriet*, Capt. Waterer, arriv'd at Bristol from the Mediterranean in Feby. Last; on the 5th of March he was impressed going to the Theatre and before the Vessels Cargo was discharged.

Application was immediately made to the Lords of the Admiralty for his release, which they refus'd unless two able Seamen or four Landsmen were substituted in his place. His Friends have ever since been using their endeavours to procure them at great trouble & Expense, Six or more have been offerd out of which one only has been accepted & is now serving his Majesty.

Purnell remains on board the *Enchantress* Receiving Ship at Bristol. A petition has been present to the Lords of the Admiralty praying them to give Orders for his release upon lodging a sufficient Sum of Money in the Regulating Captain's Hand at Bristol to pay for substitutes whenever they could be had, but even this their Lords have not thought it right to grant! The Young Man thus situated is losing a deal of valuable time independent of a chance of promotion to the command of a Vessel which the Owner of the *Harriet* had promised him if the unfortunate circumstance had not taken place.

Margin: 9 March cannot be granted; 25 March order his case to be stated.

[Adm 1/1548 B115]

506. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, 8 March 1810

Sir, In reply to your Letter of the 5th instant directing the case of Thomas Fitzgerald, Mate of the *Mathew*, to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was impressed on shore the 25 Ult., by Lieutenant Dillon under my orders, and entered voluntarily with me. He is twenty-three years of age and rated ordinary.

Enclosure: Bristol, March 1st 1810

To J W Croker Esquire[1st secretary to the Admiralty]

Sir, I request in the most respectful manner that you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the case of my Mate[Thomas Fitzgerald] who was impressed here on the 26th Ult.

On the Morning of that day he went ashore under my orders to Purchase some Cordage & other articles for the ships use, then Ready for Sea when on his Return was Impressed as before stated, altho I considered him Sufficiently Protected by being my Mate, the Vessel being Sixty Six Tons as Register[ed]. It is likewise particularly severe on him as he has an aged Mother & Wife who are wholly dependant on him for their Support. He therefore, in conjunction with me, begs that their Lordships' HM Admirals with their usual Humanity & attention to the Interest of British Seamen will order his discharge or warrant me in Providing a Substitute or Substitutes so as he may be enabled to Resume his former situation and alleviate the Misery of his little Family which will be the Inevitable Consequence of his detention. I have therefore only to add that you will be Pleased to acquaint me with their Lordships' Answer and have the honor to be with the greatest respect your very obedient Humble servant,

Thomas Quinlan, Master of the Sloop *Mathew*.

PS Please to Direct to Mr John Broderick, March Street Bristol.

Margin: Having entered voluntarily cannot be discharged.

[Adm 1/1548 B116]

507. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, 5 April 1810

Bristol, April 5th 1810

Sir, In reply to your letter of the 3rd Inst. Directing the case of Archd Cunningham on board the *Enchantress* to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was Impressed on shore the 7th Ult. by Lieut. Williams under my orders. He is an ord. seamen, twenty one years of age. This man entered here the 25th April 1805 as Boy in the second class, and appears to have been discharged from the *Vanguard* with Captain Baker by request.

Enclosure

March 17, 1810

HM Ship *Enchantress*, Broad Pill, Bristol,

To Saml Tyssen Esquire, Narboro' Hall

Honored Sir,

I take the Libberty in a Dressing these few Lines to you hoping you will not take it a miss, Sir, I shall be very thank full to you if you will tell me ware Captain Baker resides, Hon'red Sir. I was Captain Baker's Servant while in London he was so well Pleased as to give me my discharge and now, Sir, I have had the misfortune to be prest in Bristol. Sir, Captain Baker told me holmost the Last words in London that if ever I got Prest to be shore and write to him and he would do[all] in his power to get me Clare a gain, Sir. I was prest the 19 of this month. If you will oblige me with a hans her[answer] I shall be very thank full to you for I have no boddy to give my wife or child a Bit of Bread, Sir, if that I was on Shore I could maintayn my Dear Wife and child Desant[decent] as I did be fore I was prest. Honored Sir if you will faver[favour] me with a hans ser[answer] you will grately oblige you most abedient and humble Servant,

Archibald Cunningham.

Sir, Please to direct for Archibald Cunningham on bord HM Ship *Enchantress* Laying at Broad Pill near Bristol.

I hope you will Excuse the writeing.

Margin: 6 April let me see the entry of the letter. Refer this back to me... 17 April order his discharge.

[Adm 1/1548 B155]

508. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, 14 April 1810

Bristol, April 14th 1810

Sir,

In reply to your letter of yesterday directing the case of Henry Hobbs on board the *Enchantress* to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he entered with Lieutenant Williams under my orders the 4th Instant as a substitute for John Yeo on board the *Gorgon*. He is a Landsman twenty-one years of age.

Enclosure: April 12 1810

Dear Sir, I can make but one excuse for the liberty I am taking, which is the necessity of the case & that I think you will not be offended at my endeavours to interest you in favour of a worthy industrious man who has a large family of children & his bringing them up in habit of industry & honesty. One of the sons, the object of his approbation, was in a Counting House in London & was sent by the concern to[St] Petersburg and afterwards to Moscow, from where he returned last summer. I did not know of his being here till yesterday when his Father call'd on me with the sad account of his having enterd on board the Tender here. He was, poor fellow, in the utmost distress & having no interest at the Admiralty since Mr. Dickenson left it, I saw no mode of assisting him. However, in the evening I thought I might take the liberty of representing the case to you & that if my request was not improper you would assist me.

I enclose the letter he had written (under the direction of Capt. Barker who is a most humane character) & as I know that young Landsmen who have imprudently entered have been returned in finding two substitutes, I hope the same relief may be granted in this case. The father keeps a Mill at Stapleton just beyond the Dutchess of Beaufort, and you pass it as you go to the French prison. Should any testimonial of him be necessary I can procure them from every Gentlemen in Stapleton as we all respect him ...very well here, believe me, very sincerely yours,

Charles Jos. Harford.

Enclosure:

Sir, My son Henry Hobbs has enterd with Capt. Barker for the Navy, & now repent his imprudence in so doing; I have educated him and intended him for a superior line of Life and am not without hopes of placing[him] in a Better Situation, provided you will indulge me with his discharge by finding the Usual number of Substitutes, which will be considered a Great Obligation, by Sir, your most obedient & Humble servant, Henry Hobbs.

Margin: discharge on finding two landsmen

[Adm 1/1548 B175]

509. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, 5 May 1810

Bristol, May 5th 1810

Sir, In reply to your letter of 3rd instant transmitting a copy of one from Mr. Richd Else complaining that Boys of a stout and healthy growth had been repeatedly send to me from Bath, and that in several instances, Boys have been returned to the Magistrates who have been told that I would not receive them (altho' stout and hearty) because they were not four feet five inches high, I beg to observe in answer to the first part that such Boys as I have refused (about six in number) were very slight made, and either considerably under size for their age, or labouring under some bodily defect, and the constable who conducted them has upon all occasions been present at their examination by me and the Surgeon, and informed upon what ground they have been refused. In order to prevent any disappointment or unnecessary expense, I

wrote to Dr. Walcot by whom some boys were sent to me, recommending that in future he would have them examined by a Surgeon previous to being sent and that I considered that boys of fifteen years of age should not be less than four feet eight inches high, nor those of thirteen, less than four feet six, and that they must be a stout and healthy growth. The expense of twelve shilling for sending each boy from Bath appears to be much overrated. In the event of a sufficient number being procured by the magistrates for inspection, beg to submit to their Lordships that I should attend at such place as the Magistrate may point out, for the purpose of examining the Boys in question, with a Midshipman and a sufficient number of Gangmen to conduct those I may approve of, at the expense per mile pointed out by my instructions, My own expense to Bath and back by stage coach will be nine shillings.

I have the honor....G Barker.

Margin: own receipt and direct him to do as he proposes. Send a copy to Mr Else.

[Adm 1/1548 B213]

510. Captain George Barker to John Wilson Broker, Secretary to the Admiralty, 16 May 1810

Sir,

In return to your letter of the 14th instant directing me to enquire into and report upon certain abuses which are stated to exist on board the *Enchantress*, and *Ann Tender*, in the enclosed letter signed “an old Englishman”, I beg to acquaint you that I have been on board those vessels, and have strictly investigated the circumstances alluded to, and I am perfectly satisfied that there is not the smallest foundation for the charge, and that John Steel (who is the author of the Letter) has been instigated to prefor[proffer] it, in the hope of some relief from his present embarrassment, or from motives of revenge for being turned out of the Tender by the owners, for embezzlement of the Provisions.

[Adm 1/1548 B237]

511. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, 7 June 1810

Bristol, June 7th 1810

Sir, In reply to your letter of the 5th instant directing the case of William Vaughan to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was Impressed the 26th April last, in a Publick House, by Lieutenant Williams, under my orders. He is an able seamen, Twenty Two years of age.

Enclosure: to John Wilson Croker, Esquire
Waterford 28th May 1810.

Sir, About a Month ago I sent a Brigg (partly my property) called the *Resolution*, Henry Morris master, to Bristol with Troops. On their arrival at Bristol, Capt. Morris sent William Vaughan his mate on shore to get a Certificate from the officer that

commanded the troops to enable me to recover the passage money. In his way, he was met by a press gang and impressed, and on Capt. Morris applying to the officer, he refused delivering him up on account of his being taken and found out of the vessel. The Poor man having an aged Mother and Sister to support & being from his infancy in my employ, I wish so much to get him released and should it be consistent with the rules of the Navy, you would particularly oblige me to grant an order for his discharge, but if that cannot be done without finding a substitute for him, I shall readily procure one on receiving your reply. Inclosed I send the Master's affidavit of his being mate of the vessel, He is now on board the *Salvatore* at Plymouth. I hope you'll excuse the liberty I take of addressing you on this subject. I am, Sir, with great respect, your obedient and humble servant, Richd Pope.

Margin: 2 seamen or 4 landsmen.

[Adm 1/1548 B260]

512. Captain George Barker to John Barrow, 20 June 1810

Bristol, June 20th 1810

Sir,

In reply to your letter of yesterday, directing the case of John Lewton, Mate of the *Teresa* to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was Impressed on shore the 25th instant by Lieutenant Dillon under my orders. He is an able seaman, Twenty Three years of age. The *Teresa* is under repair by the shipwright, and without any part of her cargo. The Man in question was Idling about the Streets when Impressed, and another Mate is shipt in his place.

Enclosure:

To the Lords of the Admiralty,

Bristol June 26, 1810

My Lords,

We beg to acquaint your Lordships that John Lewton, Chief Mate of the *Snow Teresa*, now loading for Trinidad under a License to sail without convoy granted by your Lordships, was this morning press'd & his release refus'd under order'd by your Lordships. We humbly submit to your Lordships the Loss that will arise to us in consequence of the measure unless reliev'd by your Interference. A cargo in now loading on the *Teresa snow* which will be on board in a few days, & Freight is now waiting in the West Indies. Being depriv'd of the Mate we fear we shall lose our Voyage, as in the far advanc'd State of the Season a Voyage to the West Indies if long dely'd cannot be attempted. We therefore beg your Lordships will order the release of the Mate under the pressing necessity of the Case. We are, My Lords, your Lordships most obedient humble servants, Wm Gibbons & Co.

Margin: June 30, 2 able substitutes.

[Adm 1/1548 B294]

513. Captain George Barker²³ to John Barrow, 10 July 1810

Sir, In reply to your Letter of yesterday directing the case of Samuel Jones, Mate of the *Bristol Volunteer* on board the *Enchantress*, to be stated for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you that he was Impressed on shore the 5th Instant by Lieutenant Williams under my orders, He is an able seaman, twenty seven years of age.

Enclosure: Bristol, 7 July 1810

My Lords, The urgency of the case I trust will apologize for my troubling your Lordships in behalf of a poor distressed Widow and the Wife of an unfortunate Seaman named Samuel Jones, first mate of my ship the *Bristol Volunteer*, impressed here on Thursday last, and now on board the Tender, which I am informed is ordered to sail immediately.

His wife is now on the point of lying in, and both her & his Mother depend on his labour for their support. I have said all I can to sooth their affliction, their only hope of relief is your clemency. If He is not released I find it will be the immediate cause of his Wives death and consequent misery to his distressed Mother.

Were your Lordships to see the scene I have just left, I should[say] the widow's tears and lamentations of a poor disconsolate pregnant wife could not plead in vain, for whom with the greatest respect, I am, your Lordships most obedient servant, Thomas King.

Margin: July 9: state the case; July 11, cannot be discharged.

[Adm 1/1549 B323]

514. William Gibbons to John Wilson Croker, 7 November 1810

Sir,

William Northway, a Mate of the *Good Intent*, John Beard, Master, was impressed yesterday in consequence of being on shore at the Cook House not twenty yards from the Vessel. He is a fisherman belonging to St Johns Newfoundland & has a fishing protection, We beg your Lordships will order him to be released that he may follow his employ & return again to Newfoundland.

We have the honor to be, Sir, your most ob. & humble servant, William Gibbons & co.

[Adm 1/2337 P282]

515. Captain John Philips to John Wilson Croker, 28 December 1810

Bristol, December 28, 1810

Sir, I have to acquaint you for the information of their Lordships, on the 26th, Lieut. Row impressed the carpenter of the *Rachel* in the street of Bristol, his ship laying

²³ George Barker was relieved of his duties as regulating officer at Bristol in this month, July 1810, for reasons I have yet to discover. See Adm 1/1549 B367. His replacement was Captain John Philips.

in Kingroad. On the morning of the 27th between five and six hundred ship wrights surrounded the Rendezvous and demanded the impress'd Man and after many attempts to rescue him, striking the Lieuts. and People of the gang, as we where but fifteen in number, I was much against my inclination oblig'd to give the man up. The Person of the ringleaders are well know[n] to the Lieuts. and myself. As soon as I can get their names will transmit them to their Lordships.

I am, Sir, your humble servant, John Philips.

29 Dec. direct him to transmit their names and the circumstances of this outrage, and to endeavour to apprehend the man that was rescued.

[Adm 1/2337 P343]

516. Captain John Philips to John Wilson Croker, 24 January 1811

Sir, I have to acquaint you for the information of their Lordships that John Sullivan entered with Lieut. Bowditch. He says he is fourteen years old, is 4 feet 7 inches and $\frac{3}{4}$ high.

Enclosure: To J. W. Croker Esq., &c &c &c[sic]
Bristol 23 January 1811

Sir, On the 28th of Dec. Last I sent my Nephew on an errand – and for nineteen days could not have any intelligence where he was. In the course of this time I had sent to Bath, Gloucester & several places to try to find him – and on Wednesday the 16th January after fearing he had died by the frost, I sent on board the *Enchantress* His Majestys Sloop of War now lying in broad Pill near Bristol and there the lad is.

I feel most anxiously concerned for the lad to learn a trade, being convinced by observation that the present stage of life is the proper time for to learn or I fear he never will. My concern for him is heightened to a high degree from the circumstance of his Mother when dying, she spake with peculiar energy and emphases it is you Brother Robert I look up in confidence to take care of my children. These word sounds now in my ears and urge me forward to try this last effort which I must humbly and heartily entreat you to grant that he may be restored to me again. The lad is not thirteen years old, he was born March 2nd 1798, his name is John Sullivan. Your granting this my earnest request would forever oblige, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

Robert He. Seager, currier, 18 West Street.

Margin. Allow discharge upon repayment of slops &c.

[Adm 1/2338 B370]

517. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker Esquire, 17 February 1811

Bristol Febry. 17th 1811

Sir, I have to acquaint you for the information of their Lordships that Edwin Garraway was impress'd by Lieut. Bowdich at a Public House on the Back. He is

nineteen years old and five feet seven inches and a half high. He acknowledges to have served above three years in boats upon the River Severn and Wye.

Enclosure: Richard Hard Davis to J. W. Croker, Esquire.

Piccadilly, Feb 15. 1811.

Dear Sir, the enclosed letter reached me this morning. If you can attend to the request contained[in] it for the liberation of Edwin Garraway, it will give me pleasure & must oblige, dear Sir,

Your very obedient servant, R H Davis

2nd Enclosure: to Richard Hart Davis, Esquire, MP[Bristol]

Bristol 14th Feb. 1811

Dear Sir,

On Monday last yr press gang in this City took Edwin Garraway aged 19 years a native of Sodbury, who having lived as a waiter with Mr. Williams at Rownham Ferry, became a useful lad in putting over the Ferry Boat. But he has never been at Sea and his parents are distracted at his being taken away, add to which he is subject to sore Eyes & unfit for the service of the Navy on that acct. I have known him this four years, & he has always during that time been afflicted with sore eyes.

As this Boy has always been ye most attentive at the ferry to assist us residents at Abbots Leigh, in ye name of all your friends there, I am requested to solicit your best exertions with ye Admiralty for the discharge of this Lad, not doubting but upon this representation to them they will order his discharge.

Believe me, Dear Sir, Your most obt. Faithful servant, John Webb Hall

Margin: 18 Feb. Can't be granted. *The case was reconsidered when the Duke of Beaufort wrote on his behalf.

Enclosure: The Duke of Beaufort to J.W. Croker, Esquire

Whichwood Park, Woodstock, March 10th 1811

Sir,

I have been earnestly solicited by some respectable Persons in the neighbourhood of Bristol to apply to you for the discharge of a Man named Edwin Garraway, who was pressed in that City about a month ago, and is now on board a Sloop of War lying in that Port. The Man I have mentioned is the son of two very old & poor People, who are chiefly dependent upon him for support. If therefore you could, without impropriety, give directions for his discharge, I should feel much flattered by your kind attention to my request. I beg leave to add that E. Garraway is represented to me as a Landsman, and not in any way used to the sea.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedt. and humble servant, Beaufort.

[Adm 1/2338 P399 P432]

518. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 22 February 1811

Sir,

I have to acquaint for their Lordships' information that Charles Whyat was impress'd by Lieut. Rowe. He is 17 years old, five feet 6 inches high. My reason for

keeping him is[that] in Oct. last he was brought to the Rendez[vous] as a substitute. I rejected him as he was not twenty years of age. At that time he said he was between 18 & 19 years old and had been 4 voyages to the West Indies. On enquiry I find that he was apprenticed to Mr. Yeats, the owner of the Bristol, who gave him up; his Indentures since[reveal] that he has bound himself himself to the owners of the *Hercules* of this Port,

Enclosure: Bristol August 17th 1811

Sir,

I take the liberty to acquaint you that my son Charles Wyatt was impressed on the 18th February last and upon my petitioning their Lordships for his discharge and sending them a Certificate of his Age, their Lordships were pleased to order his discharge accordingly. But to my regret and misfortune, I have to relate to you that he was again impressed on the 11th Ultimo on board his Majesty's Brig *Papillion* off Cape Sparte[Tangier]. I most respectfully beg you will be pleased to lay this most aggravated case before their Lordships hoping they will be kind enough to take it into their humane consideration and extend their mercy to an unprotected and unfortunate Widow, whose only hope of support and happiness depends upon her child, by granting an order for his discharge for which act of condescension I will ever gratefully pray,

I am, Sir, your humble and distressed servant, Mary Wyatt

Margin: 22 Feb.[1811] Order his discharge. 19th August[1811] What was his case? to be discharged if as represented in the letter.

[Adm 1/2338 P407]

519. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 23 February 1811

Bristol, Feb. 23rd 188

Sir, The enclosed letter you will be pleased to lay before their Lordships respecting Sergt. Ogden of the 11th Regiment, who was confined by me on the 13 of Feby for rescuing a Prest Man from the Rendez[vous], a report of which I sent to their Lordships on the 14th.

Enclosure: Thos Setherton[?], Deputy Pay Master, to Captain John Philips, Royal Navy Bristol, 23 Feby. 1811

Sir, I have the Honor to request you will inform me as soon as convenient what course is to be pursued with Sergt. Ogden of the 11th Regiment Foot, now confined by you in the Main Guard of this City. This Sergt. Is ordered to...Ireland to take charge of a recruiting Party in the absence of his officer, and it is my duty to report to that Quarter or his Regt. The cause of delay and probable time you may detain him. I have the honor to be...&c.

Margin: refer it to the Secretary at War

[Adm 1/2338 B411]

520. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 29 April 1811

Bristol, April 29 1811

Sir,

You will please to acquaint their Lordships that Thos. Tuck was impressed by Lieut. Rowe. He is twenty one years old & five feet 3 inches high. He acknowledged that he has been employed between 2 & 3 years on boats on rivers and canals, that he was protected as he belong'd to the Local Militia.

Enclosure: New Park, Devizes, April 27th 1811

Sir,

A few days since I received information that Thos. Tuck, a private in the 2nd Wilts Local Militia, had been impressed at Bristol whilst attending on the River Avon as a Bargeman to a Barge that had gone from Devizes, and at the same time I was requested to send a Certificate of his belonging to the Regiment which I command. I therefore directed the Quarter Master to forward the inclosed Certificate which is this day returned to me with the accompanying letter, in consequence of which I take the liberty of troubling you, and of requesting that the Man may be discharged, desiring that I may not be supposed to have a wish which cannot be granted under the ordinary practices of the Admiralty, as in making this application I only do that in conformity to the wishes of Thos Tuck & his Parents, which by the information communicated to them by the officer of the press gang appears to be the duty of an officer commanding a Militia regiment. I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient servant. Thos. G. Estcourt.

Margin: having worked on rivers and canals, cannot be granted.

[Adm 1/2338 B482]

521. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 30 April 1811

Bristol, April 30 1811

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that Mr Hunter, Master of the *Nimrod* letter of Marke[privateer] brought David Macball, gunner of the said ship to the Rendezvous for mutinous behaviour. He has a regular discharge from the *Salvatore* having found four substitutes. I shall keep him at the Rendezvous until I know their Lordship's pleasure.

Margin. Cannot allow discharging him

[Adm 1/2338 B484]

522. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 14 May 1811

Sir,

You will please to acquaint their Lordships that John Millard was impress'd by Lieut. Rowe. He is 28 years old, five feet 8 inches high, has been at sea twelve years. Enclosed is a copy of a letter I wrote you on the 22nd Inst. stating my reasons for pressing the said John Millard. I have to observe there is hardly a Ship out of this Port (on her arrival) that the Capt. Does not endorse over her register to the mate. By that means the marine is deprived of a Number of Men.

Enclosed: Letter of 22 April 1811

Captain John Philips to J. W. Croker

Sir,

I have to state to you for their Lordships' information that eight months ago a man of the name of Millard was impressed and liberated by me as it appeared the register of the Ship *Avon* was endorsed over to him, and from Mate he became Master, and went in her to the West Indies. She arrived here about six weeks ago. The said Millard came home Mate of her. The register is again endorsed over to him and you will see by the enclosed Advertisement that another Master is going in her to the West Indies.

2nd enclosure: to J. W. Croker Esquire,

23 Water Lane, 24th April 1811

Sir,

Respectfully request that you will be pleased to move my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to order the discharge of John Millard, Master of the *Avon* of Bristol, from H. M. Ship *Enchantress*, laying at Bristol, into which ship he was impressed on the 22nd inst. I understand that the reason assigned by the Regulating Captain for detaining him is his conception that he was made Master merely for the purpose of evading the Impress, but in answer thereto I beg to state (a statement that can be verified on oath if necessary) that the said John Millard was appointed Master of this Vessel so late as July last, & that it was the intention of his Owners that he should retain that Situation but that George Jenkins, the supercargo, contrary to their directions took upon himself the command of the *Avon* in Jamaica, for which he was dismissed by the owners, who reinstated John Millard in March last. These observations are proved by the under servants on the annexed Copy of the *Avon's* Register, to which I respectfully refer you. On these grounds, I trust I might claim the Man's discharge, from the general indulgence extended by their Lordships to cases of this description. But I have another appeal to make, which will, I am convinced, have great weight with their Lordships. John Millard has an aged Father & 3 children, all depending upon him for support, who must be reduced to distress if he is detained. In addition to this, I beg simply to State that one of His Family (His Brother) is already serving His Majesty as a midshipman aboard the *Enchantress*. Under these circumstances, I trust their Lordships will not see any objection to his discharge.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your very obedient Servant, William Orger

Margin: 15 May, cannot be granted.

523. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 16 May 1811

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that I received the enclosed Letter from Lieut. Turner this Morning. I have not yet dispatched a Lieut. to keep post. If the Gangs are sent by Land, it will immediately cause an alarm. As the *Ann* Tender is not here, I should propose to their Lordships to hire one of the Pill Sloops for a week or ten days. The Gangs can embark from the *Enchantress* in the night. Should this meet their Lordships' approbation they can be sent away on Saturday night.

Enclosure: Lieutenant Turner to Captain Philips
HM Tender *Ann*, Falmouth May 13th 1811

Sir, I beg leave to inform you of my sailing from Plymouth yesterday morning. In the Evening the Wind came round to the West with a heavy Sea & thick Sailing to shore up for Falmouth. This morning sailed again with the Wind to the ESE; about ½ past 9 o'clock, the Manicles[Manacles] here WBS about 3 miles, the Foretop gave way which carried away the Topmasts and with very great difficulty got the Vessel round clear of the Manicles and got safe into this port. I shall repair damages as soon as possible and sail immediately. Have wrote to their Lordships by this post.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant, Jonathan Turner.

Margin: May 17 authorize him to do so.

[Adm 1/2339 P510]

524. Plans for reorganizing the Impress Service in the Severn area, May 1811

J.W. Croker to Captain John Philips, 29 May 1811

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in considering the expense of the *Enchantress* with a complement of 35 men, amounting to very near £3000 per annum, in addition to the expense of the Rendezvous under your superintendence, & comparing it with the small number of Men raised by you, commands me to signify their directions to you to take the circumstance into consideration & to report to me for their Lordships' information whether you can in consequence of being on the spot, suggest any Plan for securing the Men procured at a less expense than the present mode until they shall from home to home be taken away. As you know the number likely to be procured per month, you can judge what size Vessel is required to secure them until the Tender attached to the Rendezvous at Swansea (no great distance) can be sent to receive them. I am farther commanded to observe for your information that a small vessel for similar service has been put into the charge of the Regulating Captain at Waterford, to be taken care of & the new raised Men guarded by the Lieutenants & gangman under his Command. I am...

On the men raised Philips reported: "In the ten months, I have been at Bristol have raised three hundred and twenty Men and boys, the greatest number of Men raised are from May to December, in these three months the average from twenty to thirty."

Plans outlined by the Admiralty: 15 May 1811

The Regulating Captain at Bristol to be ordered to detach the most active of the Lieuts. with his Gang, to Newport in Wales, to open a Rendezvous there for the

purpose of Impressing & otherwise raising all the Men he can for the Navy. He is to be instructed to send over the gang & to begin this Service in the most secret manner in his power, strengthening it for the first 2 or 3 days by lending a few Men from the other gangs. He is to further consider what measures can be adopted to secure such Men as may be raised the number of which their Lordships trust will not be inconsiderable on the commencement of the service in question at Newport, & he is to direct the Tender to appear off that part[of the coast] to receive then at such time as he may judge proper, consistent with the arrangement he may make with the officers & should the Tender be at Swansea he is to apply to the Regulating Captain there to send her at the time appointed.

[Adm 1/2339 P530, 534a, 538]

525. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 29 August 1811

Bristol August 29th 1811

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that Will Gordon was impressed by Lieut. Pasley out of the *William Miles*. He is 27 years of age, five feet eight inches high, a shipwright and able seaman. The said William Gordon was one of the most active of Mr. Hillhouse's Carpenters in rescuing the shipwright that was impressed from the rendezvous in December last.

Margin: For which reason their Lordships do not think he should be discharged.

Enclosure: To the Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty We the Minister &c of Clifton Assembly beg leave to state to your Lordships the distressed situation of Sarah Gordon and her seven children, the eldest of who is only thirteen Years of Age, whose Husband, William Gordon, was impressed from the Ship *William Miles* of this Port; and by his Industry has supported his Wife and Family without any Parochial assistance, who by his being detained by the Honorable Board must immediately be wholly supported by the Parish which is already burthened with Poor.

We humbly hope your Lordships will be pleased to forgive and restore him to his Family, having always borne the Character of a sober, industrious, hard working man.

Clifton August 26th 1811. Signed John Hensman, Minister and 2 churchwardens and several inhabitants, including George and Ames Hilhouse.

[Adm 1/2339 P638]

526. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 4 September 1811

Bristol 4th Sept. 1811

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that Sven Charles was impressed by Lieutenant Rowe. He is 38 years of age, five feet seven inches high, and an able seaman. He is a Swede & married in Bristol.

Enclosure: Bristol August 31st 1811

My Lords, With the Deepest Humility I bed to address your Lordships most humbly praying your Lordships will be Pleased to Admit of my Husbands Discharge, Sven Charles, who was impress and is now on board HM Tender at Pill near Bristol. He is far from a Healthy man and will not be of much service to His Majesty. I most Humbly intreat your Lordships will favour me with an answer and say for what sum you will admit of his Discharge or how many men I shall get in his room. Your Lordships answer will be most Gratefully Acknowledged by

Your Lordships most humble and obedient servant, Sarah Charles
At No 7 Yacht House Lane, Lower College Street.

Margin: 5 Sept. £80

[Adm 1/2339 P 646]

527. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 6 September 1811

Bristol, Sept 6th 1811,

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that Edwin Meredith, Boy of the 2nd Class, was sent to the Rendezvous by the magistrates of Bristol.

Enclosure: Bristol Sept. 3rd 1811

Honored Sir,

I beg leave to Request the favour of you to compassionate my situation as a widow having four small children, the elder of whom about 15 years old by Enticements strayed from me and entered in his Majesty's Service on board the *Enchantress* Sloop of War, laying in Kingroad about three weeks ago being in no degree accustomed to the Sea. I trust another lad in his Room would be greatly serviceable to you. My son, Edwin Meredith, being the oldest is now become Serviceable in my business, by which my support of my family depends. I therefore most humbly solicit the favour of you to grant me his discharge by procuring a lad in his Place. The favour of your speedy reply will most truly oblige, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

Fanny Meredith.

Please to address to me, No 3 Salmon Court, Old Market Street, Bristol.

Margin: 7 Sept. being sent by the civil power cannot be agreed to.

[Adm 1/2340 P653]

528. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 23 October 1811

Bristol, Oct 23rd 1811

Sir,

You will please to acquaint their Lordships that John Almy was Impressed by Lieut. Rowe on the Information of two American Seamen who will make oath that while serving on the same ship with Almmy that he frequently brag[g]ed of

his having two Country's to protect him as he was born in America and married at Liverpool in England.

Enclosure: Letter from Admiralty asking for details because Mr. R Vigor, Secretary to the American Consul, had requested his release.

Enclosure: In Chancery

John Amy of Newport Rhode Island in America, lately second mate on board the ship *Rebecca* of Bristol, of which Samuel Gardiner was Master, maketh oath and said that he is an American by birth and that he is not nor hath he ever been married in England or in any part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. And that _____ the woman with whom he sometime back cohabited at Liverpool in the County of Lancaster in that part of the said United Kingdom called England aforesaid is not his wife. John Almy

Sworn on board his Majestys Ship *Enchantress* near Pill in the County of Smerset the seventeenth day of October one thousand eight hundred and eleven, before me, J.B. Grindon.

Margin: 24 Oct. Being married in Liverpool, discharge cannot be granted.

[Adm 1/2340 P722]

529. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 10 December 1811

Bristol, Dec. 10th 1811

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that Chas Carvillie was impressed by Lieut. Bowdick out of a Public House on the Back. He is 24 years of age, 5 feet 3 inches high, and an able seaman.

Enclosure: To the Rt Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

We take the liberty of stating to your Lordships that the Mate of our Ship *Edward* was impressed yesterday into the service of the Navy, at a period when he was actually employed in discharging his duties incumbent on his situation. It may be necessary to inform their Lordships that the *Edward* is taking on her Outward Cargo, and which cannot be done without the direction of the principal officer. Consequently much of the Cargo must be exposed upon the Quays, and the remainder cannot be got on board until that Officer is discharged. We hope your Lordships will be pleased to take into consideration the inconveniences & delay we are thus suffering, and be pleased to order the Mate's discharge, or we shall be exposed to the most serious obstruction and ultimate loss to our Business.

We are, with every respect, Your Lordships' most devoted & very humble servants,
Robert Claxton & Son

Bristol 8th December 1811.

Margin: 11 Dec. cannot be granted.

[Adm 1/2340 P772]

530. Getting a brother out of the navy, January 1812

Bristol, January 1st 1812

Honored Sir,

My brother John Bird having unfortunately been impressed about a fortnight since and sent on board HMS *Enchantress* at Pill, from whence he is removed to a Tender on Friday last, and is on his way to Plymouth to go on board the *Salvador Del Mundo*. I beg to acquaint your honor that in consequence hereof, my mother being deceased, I had only to look for him for a support, which being now deprived of, being too young to be capable of getting my brig, I do not know what will become of me. And as this unfortunate Circumstance has happened, I have only one Prospect whereby I may be able to raise a sum of money to procure his discharge. In case the same shall be approved of, I am in expectation daily of the arrival of my uncle from America, who will with pleasure procure the money for his discharge and would be exceedingly aggrieved if he knew of his being impressed.

May I therefore humbly beg & intreat you will please to lay the Circumstance before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and to request their Lordships will please to direct that he may remain for a time on board of the *Salvador del Mundo* until the return of my uncle, which is daily expected, who will, without delay, lay down the sum that may be requested for his discharge.

Their Lordships compliance here will be remembered with gratitude....Mary Bird.

PS the favour of an answer to Mr John Bird, Gardner, Gloucester Road, Bristol, is requested.

Margin: John Bird £60 to pay

[ADM 1/2341 P4]

***531. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 4 January 1812**

Bristol, Jan. 4th 1812,

Thomas Elmes had been impressed out of the Waterford packets. He confessed to Lieut Bowdick that he had been to sea for more than 2 years, and was retained. His father petitioned for his release, which was refused.

Enclosure: Bristol Dec. 31st 1811

“To the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

I am under the painful necessity of troubling your Lordships. Your Lordships’ answer to my memorial of the 19th instant was that your Lordships required some further proof, In consequence of which, I have written to Waterford for an affidavit of a person who knew the time my son was apprenticed and from whom. I have not as yet had a reply. Your Lordships will pardon me in saying that I really thought my affidavit alone would have been sufficient. I have been Master of a Vessel for many years out of this Port, and I trust always conducted with that propriety which might give Validity to my Affidavit, and if necessary my Wife also, who is now in

Bristol can give her affidavit as to my sons age, as well as to the Indentures being lost, She having had them in her possession within the last Ten months. But as I find my son is sent to Plymouth, I must humbly beg your Lordships to point out such measures as your Lordships may think proper for his release under all the Circumstances of the Case.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray, William Elmes.
Allow me humbly to request your Lordship's early reply."

[Adm 1/2341 P4]

532. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 8 January 1812

Bristol January 8th 1812

Sir, You will please to acquaint their Lordships that the Mayor of Bristol sent to me this morning saying that application had been made for the Silver Oar to take out of the *Enchantress* the three boys mentioned in the margin, as they were apprentices. I examined their indentures and finding their masters at Wolverhampton I directed Lieutenant Pasley to discharge them on being paid for their slops.

Margin: The boys were George Kendrick, John Griffiths, William Burke, described as boys of the third class.

[Adm 1/2341 P11]

533. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 27 January 1812

Bristol January 27th 1812

Sir,

You will please to acquaint their Lordships this morning Lieut Bowdick impressed a man named Joseph Marie with a pass from the American Consul at Guernsey. I examined him before the American Consul here when he acknowledged that he was a Frenchman and born Lorcent. He was taken in an American and carried into Guernsey. Should wish to know if he is to be sent to Stapleton[Jail].²⁴

[Adm 1/2341 P61]

534. Bargaining for a son, February 1812

Enclosure in letter dated 4 February 1812
To J. Wilson Crocker Esquire, Bristol,
1 February 1812

²⁴ Stapleton was the prison for prisoners-of-war. See Dorothy Vintner, "Prisoners of War in Stapleton jail, near Bristol", *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 75 (1956), 136–70.

Sir,

I am an aged widow woman with a large family dependent on me for support. I do by carrying on the business of a Butcher at Carleon[Caerleon] in Monmouthshire and cannot continue without the assistance of my son, who is the only person I have to manage the practical part as well as to purchase stock, which he has done for some years. But unfortunately he came to Bristol and in a fit of intoxication entered on Board the Tender where he now is, which has induced me to come here with considerable difficulty and fatigue at my time of life as well as expense. And on inquiry find from Capt Phillips, the regulating officer, that there is no mode of procuring his release but by paying the enormous sum of Forty Pounds, which sum a Mr. John Ambrose, a person well known to Capt. Phillips, will immediately pay to him ...on receipt of your order for his discharge. I fully hope my unfortunate Situation will induce your honor to give this subject your immediate attendance as I cannot leave this place until favoured with your determination...Please to address to a Mr John Ambrose Bristol, or to Capt. Phillips, requesting him to send the same as above, I remain, Sir, in much distress...Margaret Charles

PS my son's name is Walter Charles.

*Charles was 25 years of age, impressed by Lieutenant Bowdick, the Admiralty agreed to £40 for his discharge.

[Adm 1/2341 P88]

535. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 6 March 1812

Enclosure:

Bristol 4 March 1812

To J. W. Crocker, Secretary to the Admiralty

Sir, Last evening John Payton, mate of the ship *Jarrett* now discharging, was taken by the Impress Service under Capt. Phillips. He is a young man that is likely to be the chief support of his parents and it is my intention to give him the command of the ship in the first vacancy.

May I therefore request that you will be pleased to lay this matter before the Lords of the Admiralty. I hope they will be pleased to allow him his liberty in paying the fine or finding substitutes. I am...Will Holt

*John Payton was impressed by Lieut Rowe in the streets of Bristol. He was 24 years old, rated able seaman, and the cost of his discharge was £80.

[Adm 1/2341 P 138]

536. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 12 March 1812

Bristol, 12 March 12th 1812

Sir, Thomas Jones was impressed on 18th February out of the brig, the *King George* of Newport. He claimed he was the mate and had been so for 2 years or more, but

he had no documents to prove it. The affidavit sent from Newport did not match his description, which said he was 37 years of age, born in Swansea, with a fair complexion, blue eyes and brown hair, height 5 feet six inches. The lieutenant who impressed him said he was 26 years of age and Irish.

Margin: release denied

[Adm 1/2341 P143]

537. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 13 March 1812

*13 March 1812 Captain Philips had impressed James Walker, whom he believed was 30 years of age and a “seafaring landsman”, with over two years as Captain’s steward.

Enclosure: To the Honourable Commissioners at the Admiralty Board
Gentleman, I beg to represent to your Honors that my servant James Walker, Employed in my Bonded Warehouse here, was this morning pressed & sent on board a Vessel here to serve in the Navy. James Walker had been once only at Sea from this port in the Capacity of Steward in a Merchant Ship & is not therefore a regular bred Seaman, besides which he is married & a Housekeeper. As I conceive this Man is not exactly of the description of men wanted for the Navy, I should feel obliged if your Honorable Board would permit him to be discharged.

Captain Phillips, your officer at this port has kindly promised that the man shall not be sent from hence until my application has been answered & I shall esteem it a favour if you will take it into your consideration, I am, Honorable Sirs,

Thomas Rossiter, Bathurst Warehouse, Bristol, 12 March 1812

Margin: refused

*There was a second petition dated 30 March 1812 from William Akermen & Sons, claiming Walker was “but a landman” consequently “we would wish to know the terms upon which the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty would grant his Liberation.”

*This time the Admiralty demanded £40.

[Adm 1/2341 P147, 171]

538. Trying to get a son out of the navy, March 1812

Enclosure: Bristol 30th March 1812

Honorable Sirs,

I humbly beg leave to represent to your Lordships that my Son Thomas Cooke was impressed into His Majesty’s Service and is now on board the *Enchantress*. Most humbly request permission for his being detained on board said ship while I raise the money required to procure his discharge. He being rated as ordinary

Seaman, is subject to ill health & has had a paralytic stroke. But your Lordships' Condescension to my request will greatly alleviate the distress & sufferings of an afflicted mother, who most humbly subscribes herself your Lordships' most humble servant,

Ann Cooke, Orchard Place, Boot Lane, Bedminster.

Margin: discharge refused

[Adm 1/2341 P171]

539. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 2 April 1812

Bristol 2 April 1812

Sir,

You will please to acquaint their Lordships that Thomas Steward, mate of the *Sarah*, was pressed out of her by Lieutenant Lane on his saying that he was twenty yrs. of age. I did not consider him a legal mate – I refer you to the enclosed letter... He the same day produced a certificate of his baptism wherein he is 22yrs of age. I have therefore discharged him.

Enclosure: To the Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty,
Bristol 31 March 1812

My Lords,

The *Sarah*, John Heatly, Master, being loaded with a valuable Cargo of sundry Merchandize for Gibraltar, and intending to sail tomorrow, which she is prevented from doing in consequence of the Mate being this morning taken out of the Vessel by your Lordships' Officers employed in the impress service, and Capt Phillips, the regulating Captain tells me He cannot release him without an order from your Lordships on Account of his being only Twenty years of age. I was not aware of this when her Cargo was taken on board, but as the Captain knows but little about it, having left the whole to the Mate, I pray your Lordships under these circumstances to give directions for his liberation.

I am...George Swatell

Ps The Mate's name is Thos. Steward

[Adm 1/2341 P174]

540. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 2 April 1812

Bristol 2 April 1812. Captain Philips reported that Joseph Bees entered as a volunteer with Lieutenant Lord, aged 22 years of age and rated a landman. This produced a petition from his father, also Joseph Bees

Enclosure: To whom it may concern.

I, Joseph Bees of the parish of St Phillips and Jacob in the County of Gloucester have a son named Joseph Bees, lately entered at the Rendezvous in Princes Street

and[who] is now on Board the Sloop of War *Inchantress* now lying at Pill. The same Lad has never been at Sea and it is my wish to Get him off as Mr Phillips, The Regulating Officer, desired me to Write to the Admiralty to let me know the lowest that I may procure his Discharge as I am but a Labouring Man and in Very Low Circumstances. Please let me know where I am to pay the money. The lad is about 19 or 20 years of age.

Please to direct to Joseph Bees Gloucester Lane St Phillips, Bristol, ...Joseph Bees. March 31st 1812.

Margin: the matter was referred to the Admiralty.

[Adm 1/2341 P174]

541. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 21 April 1812

Bristol 21st April 1812

Sir,

You will please acquaint their Lordships that I beg leave to assure them every exertion is used for raising men. This is the dearest part of the year, Five vessels only having arrived from aboard since the beginning of the year and two of those put into Cork where every man was impress'd.

On referring to the books of the Rendezvous 18 months prior to my superseding Captain Barker, I find we have raised in the same time some nearly three men to his one.

(63 men had been raised from 1 Jan to 12 April 1812, 36 of which[57%] had been impressed.)

[Adm 1/2342 P210]

542. Trying to get a young lad out of the navy, June 1812

Richard Boulsam entered at the rendezvous. He was 5 feet 5 inches tall and claimed he was 18 years of age.

Enclosure: Bristol, 15 June 1812.

Sir,

I take the liberty to apply to you to allow the discharge of a young Lad of the name of Richard Boulsam, of the age of 16 years that has been impressed by the gang here under the following circumstances.

The young lad in question lives near Swansea in Wales and came from thence to this place on business in Wales...on business for his father, a poor man with six other children, whose livelihood principally depends on this Lad for support.

It has been stated to me that underhand means were taken to get him to enlist, but this I know that when he did so he was in a state of intoxication. Moreover, he is much subject to fits and never having been at sea, cannot be of much service on board a Man of War.

I have applied to Captain Phillips here to discharge him, but he has referred me to you under these circumstances and as the Tender on board of which he now is, is about to sail, I take the liberty to request you will order his immediate discharge and hope for the consideration that I have the honor to state to you, that you will do so without any conditions, but if agreeably with the rules of the Service you cannot do so without a Lad of the same age be found in his place, poor as the Father is, he will try to procure one, rather than his Son, upon whom the Family's subsistence mostly depends shall be taken away.

I am aware that applications of this nature must be frequent and oft times with a false colouring to impose, but I beg to say that what I have stated to you I know to be the truth.

I have the honor to be, Sir....D Bayton.

Margin: voluntarily entered, cannot be parted.

[Adm 1/2342 P210]

543. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 3 July 1812

Bristol 3 July, 1812

Sir,

In answer to your letter of 2nd instant you will please to acquaint their Lordships from the very disgraceful & riotous proceedings of Mr. Hunt,²⁵ one of the candidates & the mob attending him on Tuesday last, I gave directions to the Lieutenant under my orders to take in their Flaggs as the Rendezvous has been threatened by the rioters, and on no account to go out with their men. Nor have the gangs in anyway interfered with the election excepting three men who are freemen of this City and are sworn in as extra Constables by the Mayor.

Margin: their lordships are perfectly satisfied.

[Adm 1/2342 P 292]

544. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 21 July 1812

Bristol, 21st July 1812

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter wherein their Lordships observe they will be under the necessity of discontinuing the expense of this Rendezvous if more men are not raised. You will be pleased to acquaint their Lordships that every

²⁵ Henry "Orator" Hunt was a radical gentleman-politician, best known for his participation at the meeting in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester in August 1819, when the yeoman cavalry sabred down members of the crowd, an incident that became known as Peterloo. He burst onto the Bristol scene in 1807. On this by-election in June 1812, see Jeremy Caple, *The Bristol Riots of 1831 and Social Reform in Britain* (Lewiston, 1990), 88–92 and John Belchem, *Orator Hunt. Henry Hunt and English Working Class Radicalism* (Oxford, 1985), 27–37.

exertion to procure Men has been used by myself and officers. During the first 18 months of my appointment to this service, more than three men to one were raised by me than the three years preceding, and it is solely to this cause that I attribute the scarcity of seamen and think I may with safety assert that there are not five impressible men in the City of Bristol. The Jamaica fleet is expected daily. Last Saturday I sent Lieut Lord and ten men in a boat to Clevedon Bay to prevent if possible the men from landing in the Bristol Channel which they invariably do and conceal themselves either on the Devon or Welsh Coast until the Fleet sail again, As there is nothing to prevent them[returning?] on the Coast of Devon and Somerset.

(* Between January and Dec 1812, 237 men and boys entered the navy, 39[17% of which were impressed] 35% of the recruits were boys of the 2nd and 3rd class.)

[Adm 1/2342 P300, 308; Adm 1/2343 P 542]

545. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 3 August 1812

Bristol, Aug 3rd 1812

Sir, Captain Walton of Stapleton Prison informs me there are Blacks, natives of Guadeloupe & Martinique that have volunteered for the navy. I wish to know if it is their Lordships' pleasure I should receive them. I am...John Philips, regulating Captain.

[Adm 1/ 2342 P323]

546. *Severn pilots and impressment, August 1812

*In early August 1812, James Marlow was taken out of the snow *Sarah*. He claimed he was a pilot but had nothing to show for it and he was not on the list of pilots for the Severn. He was 32 years old, 5ft 10 inches high and rated as an able seaman. The Admiralty refused to release him despite the following petition.

Chepstow, August 12th 1812

My Lords,

We whose names are hereunto annex'd being Merchants, Ship-Owners and principal inhabitants of this Port, beg leave to address you relative to the case of James Marlow, a Pilot and Resident of this Town who was lately impressed by an Officer and Boat Crew belonging to His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*, while piloting the snow *Sarah*, Stephen Wallis Master, from Kingroad to this place, whereby we fell very great inconvenience being deprived of his services as a Pilot & having a great number of Vessels constantly trading from hence to Ireland, Lancashire, Cumberland and more particularly in conveying His Majesty's Timber from hence and the Forest of Dean to Plymouth and other Dockyards belonging to His Majesty, and the situation of Chepstow being such that unless some skilful Pilots are employed to navigate the Ships and Vessels trading to and from it, through that dangerous passage called the Shutes lying between Chepstow and Kingroad full of Rocks and

a strong current not less than three Miles in length, it will be impossible to Export or Import Merchandise to or from this Port or the Port of Gloucester. At the time the aforesaid James Marlow was impressed we had only three Pilots belonging to our Port which was not a sufficient number for the trade done by Shipping, many vessels being obliged often to wait and frequently have a fair wind and Passage from the circumstance of not having Pilots to carry them though that dangerous part called the Shutes as heretofore mentioned. We hope and trust that this relation of the facts will prove to you the necessity of releasing the said James Marlow and that you will be pleased to direct that he may be discharged from on board the *Enchantress* by which you you will confer an obligation on,

My Lords, your very obedient servants, Bowsher Hodges & Mathias (and about 40 others.)

[Adm 1/ 2342 P323]

547. Getting the mate of a West Indiaman out of the navy, August 1812

Enclosure: Bristol 17th August 1812

We beg leave to state to you that the Chief Mate[James Thomas] of our Ship *Bristol*, lately arrived from the West Indies loaded with Sugar, has been impressed and is now on sufferance, having deposited the sum of £80 with the regulating Impress Officer of this Port until the sentiments of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty are known.

Inclosed we send you The Captains of the Ship affidavit proving him to be the chief mate, which you will now how the goodness to lay before their Lordships at the same time mentioning how much the Interest of the Owners will be injured should he not be discharged as the valuable cargo now on board is under his care. We trust our paying the deposit money £80 he will have his discharge as we understand has been the case with Mates of this Port under similar circumstances.

We have the honor to remain, Sir, Your most obedient Servants, Messrs Vaughan & Longmore

Margin: discharged for £80

[Adm 1/2342 P 350]

548. Impressing a Pill boatman, September 1812

HMS *Enchantress*, 24 Sept 1812

Lieutenant James Pasley to Capt. John Philips,

Sir,

In answer to your letter of yesterday date directing the case of Charles Antic [Anstice] to be stated for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to acquaint you he was impressed by me the 19th July last out of a Pill yawl, twenty miles to the westward of King Roads for assisting in landing five seamen out of a ship from the West Indies. I find that if I do not Impress some of those

assisting Pilots to put a stop to their landing of men, it will be impossible for me to get as many men as I could wish or should other ways do, Was it not for those assisting Pilots with their yawls. I have frequently caution[ed] them of It. He is an Ordinary seaman, thirty three years of age, and has enter'd for the ship since impressed.

Enclosure: to the most High Lords of the Admiralty
My Lords,

Your poor unfortunate Portishoner is the Mother of eight small children and as got a poor old Father 84 years of Age, as no support in the Earth but a sobber industrious husband witch is impressed on bord his Maggesties Sloop of War *Enchantress* lying in Kingroad, Leut. Peassly.[He] has allways laboured hard on the River with the Bristol Pilots to get my large family bread. He as served his time as a Pilot, as never been to Sea. I ham come a hundred and twenty 5 Miles Putting my trust in god that your Lordships will be Pleased to releas[e] him to his family that is very much distressed. Your Lordships poor Portishoner Had the Bad misfortune to lose a bote Better than 2 years ago going down chanell with the Maggesters yacht *Dorset* witch was all we had in the world but know may lose, have brought my family to the greatest distress but I pray to god that your lordships will take it into Consideration and give him his liberty, then I and my family shall be in Duty bound to pray as long as we live, your most humble portishoner in Person, Elizabeth Anstice of Pill, near Bristol, Somerset.

decision: refuse

[Adm 1/2342 P399]

549. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 4 September 1812

Lieutenant Pasley reported that John Reilly was taken up on 22nd July out of the ship *Nelson* from Jamaica. He was 19 years of age and an ordinary seaman.

Enclosure: To John Wilson Croker Esquire
Bristol, 4 Sept. 1812

Sir, I have humbly to request you will be pleased to represent to their Lordships that my Husband has been serving his Majesty these eight years & is now on board the *Hussar* in the East Indies & to add to my misfortunes my son John Reilly, on whom myself and children chiefly depend for support, was impressed by the Lieutenant of the *Enchantress* where he still is doing duty as an ordinary seaman & solicit their Lordships will be pleas'd to take my distressed state into their kind consideration & allow my child to be discharged upon paying the usual sum which some friends have humanely offered to advance. I beg further to acquaint their Lordships that I am on a bed of sickness & unable to afford any relief to myself or Children, trusting their Lordships humanity, I subscribe myself their Lordships distressed & humble servant, Catherine Reilly.

Margin: Reilly to be discharged upon payment of £60.

[Adm 1/ 2343 P371]

***550. Buying out mates in the merchant marine, October–November 1812**

Letter of 15 October 1812. Lieutenant Howe impressed Thomas Feebin, the mate of the *Bristol Volunteer* near Clifton. He was 19–20 years old, had 5 years' experience at sea, and was taken while "loading a valuable cargo for the West Indies." Philips rated him as an able seaman. He asked for discharge and protection, which was granted on payment of £80.

Letter of 16 October 1812. James Banfill Mardon, the chief mate of the *Wilson*, was impressed by Lieut Rowe in the streets of Bristol. He was 22 years of age, 5ft 7 inches tall, and had 6 years' experience at sea. He was rated an able seaman. His discharge requested on paying "the usual sum," which was £80.

Letter of 24 Nov 1812. Rees Walters was impressed on the streets of Bristol. He was the mate of the *Nelson*, commanded by Captain William Thames, and expected to sail for the West Indies on 1 December. Rees was 25 yrs old, 5ft 6 inches tall, and rated an able seaman. A discharge was requested according to usual sum, which in this case was £80.

[Adm 1/1243 P 439, 440, 502]

551. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 20 October 1812

Philips reported that William Charles Hill was impressed on the streets of Bristol. He was 5ft 7 inches tall and had 7 years experience at sea. He was rated an able seaman.

Enclosure: To the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
The Petition of James Hill humbly sheweth that on or about the twenty seventh of september last the son of your Humble Petitioner named William Charles Hill aged near nineteen, was impressed in the Port of Bristol and put on board his Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* laying at the same Port. That your Humble Petitioner has a wife and eight children whose support wholly depends on the daily exertions of an aged Father with the assistance of the said William Charles Hill, the loss of which will be too sensibly felt by the family. Your Petitioner therefore humbly Prays That your Lordships may take into consideration the unfortunate situation of a distressed family deprived of the common necessities of life through the loss of the said William Charles Hill and that your Lordships in your Wisdom may be pleased to order that the said son of your humble Petitioner may be discharged for a Certain sum. As your Petitioner's Character is respected tho he is poor, in consequence of which two Gentlemen are willing to advance any moderate sum for his discharge ...being sensible of the misery this misfortune must plunge the family into. Your humble Petitioner further prays that your Lordships in your wisdom may grant an answer.

And your Petitioner as in Duty bound will ever pray James Hill

No 25 Mason Street, Kent Road, near Bricklayers Arms

(Admiralty asked for £80)

[Adm 1/2343 P453]

552. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 30 October 1812

Regarding William James, Captain Philips referred the Admiralty to Lieutenant Pasley's letter.

1st enclosure:

HMS *Enchantress* 30th October 1812

Lieutenant Pasley to Captain Philips

Sir, In answer to your letter of Yesterday's date directing the case of William James to be stated for the Information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

I beg to acquaint you he was impressed by me on the 2nd Inst. Out of the Schooner *Adventure* of Bridgwater, he being under age. I do not think he is more than eighteen or nineteen. It is also the opinion of the surgeon that he is no more. He is an ordinary seaman and fit for the service. I have sent you his Indentures, by which you will find he is only Twenty. I remain....

2nd enclosure: To the Right Honorable The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
The petition of John James, of the parish of Risca in the County of Monmouth, Labourer.

Humbly Sheweth that your petitioner's son, Wm James, served his apprenticeship to Captain James Powell of the Schooner *Adventure* of Bridgwater in the County of Somerset and obtained a regular protection as mate of the said Schooner from the Customs House of that place. That on the second day of October your petitioner's son was impressed in the Bristol Channel and taken from on board the said Schooner and is now lodged in the Sloop of War *Enchantress* at Broad Pill, where he has been detained until the accompanying support could be laid before their Lordships. Your petitioner therefore humbly prays that your Lordship will take his case into consideration so that my son may again be restored to me.

And your petitioner will ever pray, John James.

Margin: discharge refused

[Adm 1/2343 P458]

553. Impressing stragglers, November 1812

Letter of 25 Nov 1812.

Enclosure: Gloucester, 20th November 1812.

Sir,

I beg leave to observe that as circumstances frequently induce me to reject Strollers for recruits whose appearance and from the account they give of themselves, indicate the probability of desertion; but to whom I am to suppose might be of service to their Country when on Float, as well as other Idlers who at time frequent this place on account of the Severn Navigation, and from our Situation being Intersected by the London and Welsh Road as well as that between Bristol and Liverpool.

I am induced to take the liberty of letting you know these circumstances, and that in case you should not deem it worth while to let part of a press gang reside here, that

I shall be very ready to give you every information on the subject that may lay in my Power, in case you should feel disposed to send here after men of that description on the Receipt of my Information to that Effect. As the Post leaves this[town] for Bristol every night, when it arrives early the following morning, Opportunities might allow you to catch hold of such fellows on the Evening after I had given you notice of the same.

I have the honor to be, Sir...S D Morgan, Lieutenant Colonel.

*Margin: Admiralty approved sending some men to Gloucester from the Bristol rendezvous to pick up stragglers.

[Adm 1/2343 P506]

554. Captain John Philips to J.W. Croker, 1 December 1812

Bristol, 1st Dec 1812.

Sir,

You will please to acquaint their Lordships that George Watkins entered with Lieutenant Rowe in the beginning of October. He is an apprentice but was not claimed by his Master until the 28th November. On asking him the Reason why he did not claim his apprentice before, he informed me that he wish'd to punish him by confinement. If he had claimed him before he should have been obliged to send him to Bridewell, thus making a commissary of the Service. George Watkins is a boy of the 2nd class, 5 feet 6 inches high, was a twelve month at sea before he was bound an apprentice.

(Admiralty refused to release George Watkins.)

[Adm 1/2343 P509]

555. A lad fit for the navy? Lott Carter in December 1812

HMS *Enchantress*, Broad Pill, 8th Dec 1812

Lieutenant Rowe to John Philips

Sir,

In answer to your letter of yesterdays date desiring me to state the case of Lott Carter a boy on board His Majesty's Ship under my command for the Information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. I beg leave to acquaint you that he entered with me on the 21st of last September. He is a fine boy aged 16 years, apparently a healthy lad, and has not been afflicted (since on board here) with any of the complaints mentioned in the inclosed Letter, and he has reported to me by the surgeon fit for His Majesty's Service.

I am, Sir...Joshua Rowe

Enclosure: George Carter, a shoemaker of Bath, is encouraged to solicit the interference of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on behalf of his unfortunate

son, Lot Carter, on board the *Enchantress*, humbly hoping that when his case is made known to them they will humbly grant his releasement from an engagement he rashly entered into about nine weeks ago to serve on board one of His Majestys Ships of War, but for which service he is intirely unfit, having since the age of three years been subject to seizures in his head which often deprive him of his faculties & are attended by violent bleedings that have many time endangered his life.

Lot Carter is sixteen years of age but so delicate & small of stature as not to appear more than thirteen. He was driven to this rash step not by any inclination to a seafaring life but as a resource against want, for having eloped from his parents in consequence of some disagreement between his father & him & not having coinage to return home in a fit of despair he had recourse to this expedient for a maintenance. It was confidently hoped that the poor boy's deplorable state of health & total unfitness for the service would have been noticed by the surgeon at Bristol, under whose examination he pass'd, but no attention having been paid to the circumstances (perhaps from the expectation that money would be given for his discharge) there is now no hope of rescuing him from a situation that threatens inevitable destruction to him, but in thus appealing to the humanity of the Lords Commissioners, George Carter, having a wife & seven children who depend on him for support, it is wholly out of his power to raise a sum for the purchase of his releasement. George Carter, 18 Union Street, Bath.

2nd enclosure: I do humbly certify that Lot Carter. son of George & Mary Carter, at No 10 Union Street in the City of Bath, has been under my care and direction for a complaint which he has been labouring under at different times for these eight years and upwards. His complaint has been a suffocation and obstruction of the lungs at different times has been under the necessity of being Boulstered up in a Perpendicular Nature in the Bed for a long time together[with] very frequent violent fits in the Head, at other times Great Flurries of Blood from his Head so that his life has often been despaired of, in so much I have great reason to suspect he will be carried off with a consumption. John Bush, surgeon, Twerton near Bath, December 2nd 1812.

Margin: Discharge refused.

[Adm 1/2343 P525]

556. Impressing a foreigner, December 1812

A letter of 12 Dec 1812, concerned Thomas Thomason, a Swede who was impressed and retained by the navy because he allegedly was married an English woman in Bristol. The Swedish consulate asked for his release, claiming that the couple were not married. "It has been alledged that he is married but he and his reputed wife, who is his Landlady & to whom he is considerably indebted are ready to make Oath that they are not married to each other & that she has a Husband who is publicly known as such & sails from this Port in the Merchant's service.

*Margin: The Admiralty wanted to know the circumstances of the impressment.

[Adm 1/2343 P528]

557. Getting a son out of the navy, April 1813

Bristol, 22 April 1813:[Edward] Francis Tyler entered voluntarily on 1st March. He was 14 years of age, 4 feet 7 ½ inches tall, “a stout healthy youth, and he was sent around to Plymouth on the sixth of March last.”

Enclosure: To the Right Honorable Lords Commissioners of the Navy

The Humble Petition of Betty Selman sheweth

That her son Edward Tyler had the misfortune[fortune?] to be enticed away from his Majesty’s late ship *Nero* before she was lost; that he is now in decline and enjoys a very bad state of health – that I his Mother is advanced in age and her son was the chief of her support – that he is quite incapable of His Majesty’s Service and that there is a few friends that would advance forty pounds for his Lawful Discharge. She most humbly pray your Lordships will take her case into consideration and admit of his discharge for the above sum.

And in duty bound will every pray, Betty Selman, her mark.

At ye Castle Mill street, Bristol, 20th April 1813.

(In view of his mother’s letter, he was discharged subject to the repayment of expenses.)

[Adm 1/1735 D97]

558. Buying out a mate, April 1813

Humphrey Humphries was impressed on 16th April 1813. He was considered “very fit for HM service.” He was described as 24 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches tall, fair complexion, light brown hair, blue eyes, stout made and 10 years at sea.

Enclosure: Bristol 20th April 1813

My Lords, Humphrey Humphries mate of the sloop *Athalea* of Barmouth, myself master...was impressed by your Lordships’ officers in the impress service at this port on Friday, the 16th instant.

I have therefore to request the favour of your Lordships, directed to the commanding officer at this Port, for his discharge on the easiest terms the reperbations[reparations] of the Service will permit, he having a large family solely dependent on him. Inclosed I beg leave to hand you his protection as a proof he was Mate at the time of his impressment.

Waiting the favour of your Lordships reply, I am very respectfully, your Lordships most obedient servant Robert Humphries.

(*He was without his protection when impressed. The admiralty were prepared to release him upon payment of £80. That payment was long in coming, if at all, because a letter of 2 May 1813 reported that Humphrey Humphries departed on the *Amy* tender: “He appeared to me to be a superior man to any of the supernumeraries which I examined,” reported the new regulating officer, Captain Man Dobson, “ likewise that I think it will be a loss to the service if he is discharged.”)

[Adm 1/1735 D 98, D103]

559. Two boys fit for the navy, April–May 1813

Letter of 25 April 1813: Lieutenant Pitman reported that Samuel Hobbs, a lad of 14 years, entered at the rendezvous on the 19th April. Pitman thought him “a stout healthy Lad and answering the age and description of boys that are allowed to enter for the Service, he was in consequence sent on board HMS *Enchantress* as such.” He was described as 14 ½ years of age, fair complexion, light brown hair, hazle eyes, stout made, and rated Boy 2nd class.

Enclosure: Bristol 21st April 1813.

Sir,

I am but a poor man, by trade a Gardner, and am sorry to say that last Monday evening while I was at my daily labour my son, a Boy not 14 years old ‘till next October absconded without any provocation and the same day enlisted into his Majesty’s Royal Navy; tho a poor man I cannot but feel for the follay[folly] of my child. I have therefore most earnestly to solicit that the Lords of the Admiralty will grant him his discharge. Waiting with anxiety your answer, I am...

Thomas Hobbs. Ps. The child’s name is Samuel Hobbs.

Margin: request for release refused

Letter of 8 May 1813: Lieutenant Thomas Turner reported that Thomas Wickett, entered voluntarily on the 28th April, and was now on the *Ann* Tender. “He is a very fine boy and informed me he was turned of 14 years of age.”

Enclosure: The Humble Petition of Thomas Wickett, Sheweth, That his son Thomas Wickett a boy about 12½ years of age, was Decoyed from his parents by a Boy of a vile and abandoned Carracter to enter on board the Tender Intirely against his own Inclination. He is Small of his age and of a very weak habit of Boy and is no ways adapted for His Majesty’s Service. He most humbly pray your Lordships will be pleased to take the Case into Consideration and admit of his discharge and restore him to his unhappy Parents, and he And in duty bound will every pray, Thomas Wickett.

NB the Boy is now on board the tender at Pill. Your Lordships answer will be received with the utmost Gratitude at 46 Princess Street, Bristol, 3rd May 1813.

Enclosure. These are to Certify that Thomas Wicket, a Boy (the son of Thomas Wicket, Snr.) aged twelve years and half, has been a long time Subject to Vertiginous Complaints in the Head and Syncope from his earlier infancy and always ailing, his habit of Body often given alarm to his Friends. Given under my Hand, Barton Hill, Bristol, 30th Day of April 1813,

G Hooper, surgeon.

Margin: Discharge refused

[Adm 1/1735 D99, D115]

560. Captain Man Dobson to J.W. Croker, 3 May 1813

Bristol, 3 May 1813

The *Enchantress* being arrived at Plymouth, you will be pleased to state to their Lordships that I beg leave to suggest that she should be supplied with legs to enable her to stand up in the River Avon when she is moored therein, as she will ground every tide, and also that she should be filled with ten twelve pound Carronades²⁶ to make her effective, and land five of the six pound guns she now has, she only mounts four six pounders at present.

It might be deemed expedient to reduce her Masts a little, as she appeared to me to be overmasted, which might be the cause, at a former period, of her throwing her Guns overboard when she had eighteen.

I have the honor to be...Man Dobson

[Adm 1/1735 D118]

561. Captain Man Dobson to William Domitt, Esquire, Vice Admiral of the White

Bristol, 3 May 1813

Dear Admiral,

I beg to acquaint you that I am glad their Lordships have directed me to move the *Enchantress* as I suggested to them, for in the state and situation I found her she could be of little assistance in raising men. At the same time can assure you from the enquiries I have made and from every thing I can observe in the summer season, more men should be procured by her than by the officers and people on shore. She has, I find, been more than six years at this port, and every one from the Lieutenants downwards appears to me to have got so compleatly on shore, except the Surgeon, Mr Godfrey Baldamus, who I am told is attentive, that I am convinced if she returns here with the present appointments she will still not be of that use and made those exertions I could wish. I therefore conclude it would be good for the service that the *Enchantress* was paid off on her arrival at Plymouth, and recommissioned by an active Officer that will live on board and do his duty, by which you will obtain at present a few stout hands from her. The Marines on board are also stout men. By giving her fresh Officers and Marines and a few Supernumeraries to bring her round here, she would most probably soon get manned, and be effective for she is well calculated for the service here.

To give you a clear idea of the situation this Vessel has been in for nearly four years is not in my power, but you will be able in some measure to judge when I inform you that she lay in a small creek close to the bank, aground always about two thirds of the tide, that the Lieutenant did not live or sleep on board, and that the conducting of the Crew and new raised men was deputed to people no way calculated for such a charge, except at such times the Lieutenant thought proper to visit her.

²⁶ A short smoothbore, cast iron cannon, first produced by the Carron Ironworks in Falkirk.

Should the change be made, I beg also to inform you that there is an Officer here on the Impress Service, Lieutenant Joshua Latimer Rowe, who I find diligent and active. He commanded a Gun Brig in the North Sea, and was obliged to leave her in consequence of ill health. Was he appointed to the command of the *Enchantress*, I should expect from his local knowledge and exertions that he would when the Convoys arrive &c, succeed in raising men with the Ships, and likewise keep good order on board her. He is not acquainted in any degree with my intention to mention him in this way.

I trust you will have the goodness to excuse my troubling you this way in this business, and that you will do me the favour to prevent the necessity of my writing a public letter respecting it, as that would be unpleasant. You may depend I shall do every thing in my power to make all the means that are given me effective in the prosecution of the object I have sent here upon by you, and I trust my suggestions to endeavour to make the *Enchantress* effective will meet your approbation and assistance.

[Adm 1/1735 D122]

562. The impressment of a topmastman, May 1813

*Letter of 13 May 1813: James Giles was impressed from a collier sloop lying in the harbour on 5 May 1813. He was a foremast man without a protection and consequently was put on board the *Ann* Tender. He was described as 21 years of age, 5 feet 8 inches, fair complexion, hazel eyes, stout made, with 7 years' experience at sea.

Enclosure: Bristol May the 11th 1813

Honorable Sir,

I must trust to your goodness to Pardon me for taking the Liberty the purport of which is my Husband James Giles is unfortunately Impressed in His Majesty's Service. I am Left in a very distressed situation with a small family and very near the birth of another, and if I lose him we must all Come to the Parish. If it should please you, Honorable Sir, to take my case into consideration and name the smallest sum that he can be got off for, I shall be obliged and bound to pray for you as long as I live. He has been in the coal trade all his Life and each of the Men belonging to the Employ will add a trifle to gett him clear. I shall be ever Indebted to you Honorable Sir, if you will please to answer this as soon as you can as I am afraid my Husband will be sent to Plymouth.

I remain, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, Margaret Giles.

Margaret Giles at Mr Jameson, No. 2 Nelson Place, Redcliff Street, Bristol.
(£80 was demanded for his release, subsequently reduced to £66.)

[Adm 1/1735 D128]

563. The petition of a poor family of seafarers, May 1813

Letter of 17 May 1813: Thomas Morgan was impressed because he was almost two years at sea prior to his indenture. His mother petitioned for his release.

Enclosure: The Humble Petition of Ann Morgan, Sheweth, That she is a poor woman having had 16 children that many of them have been in His Majesty's Service and 2 of them now are in the Service. That her son Thomas Morgan was impressd and put on Board the Tender at Pill near Bristol, that he is an apprentice and has not Served out his time, that he was a Great help to his mother towards the Support of the family that there are some friends[who] will Come forward and advance the Sum of £40 for his Lawful Discharge. She most humbly pray your Lordships will be pleased to take the Case into Consideration and admit of his Discharge for the above sum. Your answer will be received with the utmost gratitude. And as in duty bound will ever pray,

Ann Morgan, at Mrs Welch's No 3 Temple Back, Bristol, 14 May 1813.

(* The offer was initially turned down, but a subsequent letter, dated 3 June 1813, reveals the Admiralty settled for £60.)

[Adm 1/1735 D135, D158]

***564. A visit to the shipyards, May 1813**

Letter of 19 May 1813: Man Dobson visited the yards of Sydenham Teast and sons, shipbuilders,[Wapping, Bristol] and found the workmen did not have protections from the Admiralty. Among the list of 85 workers were 77 shipwrights and sawyers, who technically fell under the rubric of impressible river employees. 52 of them were aged under 30.

Enclosure: Sir, We consider if the Admiralty would grant us permission to give printed protections to the shipwrights & others employed by us in the same manner as in London, it would be the means of saving Capt. Dobson much trouble & be a great convenience to us,

With respect we remain, Sir, yr obedient Servants, Sidenham Teast & Sons. We will take particular care that Capt Dobson shall always be in possession of a list & description of each man protected as in the protection so given. Wapping Dock, 20th May 1813

(* The Admiralty was agreeable to this arrangement but warned that apprentices were not protected if they had used the sea for 2 years prior to indentures.)

[Adm 1/1735 D138, 149]

565. Captain Man Dobson to J.W. Croker, 24 May 1813

Bristol, 24 May 1813

Sir, Agreeable to the orders of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I herewith enclose Lieutenant Turner's report of the case of John Collins, and I beg leave to add that I have no doubt of his having been at sea long before the date of his Indenture, the young man was brought before me and the parties could not make the necessary Affidavit. I should also think from his Appearance that he is older than the Register

specifies. I have in consequence written to Brixham in order to ascertain his age, if possible and necessary. I also enclose the papers sent to me relating to the above man.

Enclosure: Sir, I hope you will pardon the liberty taken in sending you the inclosed indenture of apprenticeship, Admiralty Protection and copy of the Register of Baptism of John Collins, who notwithstanding the same was on Friday the 21st instant impressed when the *Hope* fishing Vessel was about to proceed from Pill to Brixham to return with Fish, having in the Evening before arrived here with a quantity of Fish for the market. The Indenture and Protection have been shown to the Regulating Captain and a request was made to discharge the apprentice; The Vessel being still at Pill for want of sufficient hands. But he refused to discharge the apprentice alledging it was understood he had been to sea before he was so apprenticed although in fact he never had been.

At this Season it is injurious to me and others interested in a constant supply of Fish, For if the Protections be of no avail we are at no certainty of being able to supply our customers and so fulfilling an engagement with them as heretofore and not being aware of the impediment we reckoned upon the Vessel, the *Hope*, returning as usual with a quantity of mackerel and other Fish early in the present week. Therefore on behalf of myself and the owner Simon Collins and others interested, I humbly beg the favour of your influence in order to obtain an order for the discharge of the apprentice John Collins, he being very material fro his knowledge as a fisherman.

The Vessel being thus hindered from proceeding will I hope apologise for requesting an early attention, and that you will accordingly condescend to favour me with an answer.

I am, with all respect, Honorable Sir...Mat Cusack

*2nd enclosure: Letter of 2nd Lieutenant John Turner saying he had impressed John Collins because he had reason to believe he had been to sea for three years before his indenture. Turner thought him 19 years of age whereas the Admiralty protection of February 1813 put him down as "seventeen years of age, five feet two inches tall, fresh complexion, dark Colours eyes, wearing his own brown hair." According to this protection he was apprenticed of 16 February 1811 for 7 years to Simon Collins, the owner of the *Hope* vessel, 36 tons, of Dartmouth.

(* Dobson discovered that Collins would be 18 in October 1813, and so the Admiralty released him.)

[Adm 1/1735 D 153, 159]

566. The Pill Pilots and Watermen, May 1813

The present state of the Pill Pilots and Watermen.

The Pilots consist of thirty eight by the Haven Masters account, their authority only with the City of Bristol armed, but not signed.

Registered Watermen amount to about 1345 men, a specimen of the licence is inclosed.

The Pilots have nineteen sailing boats with a Pilot and two men, or two Pilots and one man. They sometimes go eight, ten, and twelve leagues to the westward of Lundy Island to meet vessels coming to the Severn.

There is also in Pill about thirty sailing yawls that carry generally five men each. They are manned promiscuously with Registered Watermen, and men not registered. The intention of the yawls is to assist Vessels when they approach the Shoals of the Severn, and Tow them when they enter the Avon, which from the rapidity of the tide is very necessary but they frequently neglect that duty, or make it a secondary consideration and proceed on to within a few leagues of Lundy Island in order to land the seamen as they meet the Ships and supply their places on board, also smuggle goods a considerable extent on shore. They do not fail to inform the Seamen arriving from abroad that there is a strict press at Bristol, and consequently receive large sums to take them on shore, either to the Somerset or Carmarthenshire side[of] the Severn, all the way up to Cardiff and King Road, that by the time the vessel arrives in King road not a man is to be found that is liable to be impressed.

It appears there is at Pill Pilots and Watermen 400 Men, and also that 38 Pilots and 162 Watermen would be sufficient for all the purposes of Pilotage and assistance by boats, making together 200.

I therefore beg leave to suggest that the 38 Pilots should be protected by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, or from them by the Trinity House, and that each individual should have a protection, or branch.

That the number of Watermen necessary should be protected by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for a definite time, after furnishing one good Man for every Ten of their number, that a list of the Pilots and Watermen so protected with their description should be lodged by the Corporation with the Regulating Officer in Bristol.

The sailing yawl should go lower down the River than Minehead, that being as far as is necessary for the legitimate purpose they are intended, and if a yawl should go to the westward of Minehead, the men belonging to her should be liable to be impressed.

To assist in this arrangement and to prevent the Seamen being landed when convoys arrive, I beg also to suggest that their Lordships be pleased to order me to send the *Enchantress* down as far as Lundy if she is here, at the time that a Convoy is expected, and that they would also be pleased to order at least another small vessel for some space of time and for the same purpose, The Revenue Cutter that is stationed at this port would also be of service if she was properly directed.

Man Dobson, Bristol, May 24 1813.

Enclosure: 24th May 1813

Respected Sir, I feel pleasure at your appointment for the recent proofs you have given of activity in your department, which had for a series of years ceas'd to be known.

With the locality of Pill & its inhabitants, I presume you are not as yet perfectly acquainted, which is it has been the safe refuge of sailors of all denominations, yet strange to say that during that time scarcely ten men have been impressed on shore. When there are deserters from the Navy & young men belonging to this place that exist almost by plunder at least two hundred fit for his Majesty's service & not of any are at home...The Man that had the ferry boat (a seafaring person named Gilmore) boasts that he has neither found Man or Money or even been ask'd a question during

the war! Though his being at sea was well known to every person belonging to the *Enchantress*.

Every yawl that goes to Bristol contain Lads of the foregoing denomination, altho' many of them have protections, which are issued by the Harbor Master at sixpence each – & may be procured by anyone for the sum.

Therefore Sir, it would be doing the Country and Community infinite service if you would devise the means of obtaining them for his Majesty's Service, in the cause of which I can confidently attest you would receive every assistance from the Gentleman of the surrounding neighbourhood, if required

I beg to subscribe myself a well wisher to my Country & your most obedient humble servant, AB

[Adm 1/1735 D160]

567. Captain Man Dobson to J.W. Croker, 10 June 1813

Bristol 10th June 1813

Sir,

I have to request that you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have reason to believe that the first convoy from the West Indies may be expected soon, and in order to obtain the Men arriving in the Ships belonging to this port, I hope their Lordships will think proper to order me to send the *Ann* Tender as far to the Westward as Lundy Island for that purpose, and that Captain Spicer may be ordered to send the *Ant* Tender from Swansea to take the *Ann's* place and receive the new raised men at Bristol during the *Ann's* absence.

I beg also to state my opinion that another man of War to wait off Lundy Island for the time mentioned would be necessary to prevent effectually the seamen being landed from the Merchants Ships when they arrive.

[Adm 1/1735 D166]

568. Captain Man Dobson to J.W. Croker, 10 June 1813

Bristol 10 June 1813

Sir, I have the honor herewith to inclose Lieutenant Turner's report of the case of William Jenkins a Trowman, for the information of my Lords ...of the Admiralty, which is materially different from the statement of Mr Cranidge, also sent herewith. However, as the Man was one belonging to the Trows at the time the Protections were granted, and being forty six years of age, I have caused him to be discharged, agreeable to the order of their Lordships, without further troubling them on the business.

I beg also that you will be pleased to inform their Lordships that the Trows are in a state at present difficult to be understood with regard to their Men and the protections granted, but that I shall endeavour to find out their state for their Lordships' information, and likewise take care as much as possible that the trade of Bristol by the Trows may not be impeded.

Enclosure: Academy, St Augustine's Quay, Bristol, June 3rd, 1813

At the request of Mr Edward Hughes, Owner of the Trow *Endeavour* belonging to Monmouth, I transmit to your Lordships a copy of a protection now in the Hands of the said Edward Hughes, viz., "The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having signified to the Severn Traders that if they would furnish one man in ten for His Majesty's Fleet from the Body of Trowmen employed by them who may be liable to the Impress, the Rest should be protected during the present War. I do hereby certify that Mr. Thomas Hughes, Owner of the Trow *Endeavour* belonging to Monmouth, has procured his Quota as required and having so done, the Man on Board the said Trow are not be to impressed, providing they have not served in any of His Majesty's Ships, or Foreign Voyages in Merchant's Ships. Given under my hand at Bristol, this 1st Day of May 1807, G Barker, Regulating Officer. A True Copy.

Notwithstanding the above protection the Condition of which hath been fulfilled by Mr Hughes, one of his Men, viz. William Jenkins aged 46, who hath a wife and 6 small children solely dependent on him for support, and who hath spent the whole of his life in the Severn Employ having been never at Sea, was impressed on Thursday 27th Ultimo and is now on board His Majesty's Tender in this port, contrary to the express engagement of your Lordships. Your Lordships are therefore most humbly requested forthwith to liberate the said William Jenkins and restore him to his Family and Employer. I am, Your Lordship's Obedient And Humble Servant, John Cranidge.

(*Lieutenant Turner's letter, dated 7 June 1813, reveals that he impressed William Jenkins because he did not have his protection with him.)

[Adm 1/1735 D 168]

569. The impressment of an older trowman, June 1813

Letter of 11 June 1813: Thomas Hull was impressed on 26th May from a collier sloop on the quay. Questioned at the rendezvous, he said he had been working on the trows and belonged to one. He lacked a protection and was therefore impressed. He was rated as a "seafaring landman, 45 years of age, brown complexion, brown hair, brown eyes, stout made"

Enclosure: 49 Lower Grosvenor Street, 5 June 1813

Abram Roberts to John Croker, Esquire, Admiralty

Sir,

There is a man who has seen many better days, whose father was an eminent Surgeon and died, leaving his family in easy circumstances. The Son, who is the object of my giving you this trouble, formerly navigated vessels on the Severn, and had five of them his own property, but having been reduced by an overwhelming succession of unfortunate circumstances to a state of indigence and great distress, was compelled to work on board as a servant. His name is Thomas Hull, was pressed about ten days since, and is now on board the Tender at the mouth of the Bristol River. He has never been at sea, is represented to me to be above 40 years of age, and having five children, they will become destitute of support unless it should please their Lordships to cause him to be liberated and enable him by his industry to procure a scanty maintenance. I therefore request You will do me the favour to allow

the case to be presented to their Lordships for their kind and indulgent consideration, and if on due enquiry the facts should prove such as have been communicated to me, and he be deemed deserving their Lordships' notice that he may be discharged from the tender and restored to his family. With great respect I have the honor to be, Sir....
Abram Roberts

[Adm 1/1735 D169]

570. Captain Man Dobson to J.W. Croker, 28 June 1713

Bristol 28th June 1813

Sir,

I have to request you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the *Enchantress* having missed the *Ann* Tender off Lundy Island, the latter arrived in King Road this morning with seventeen impressed men taken from the Ships of the West India convoy bound to this port, some of whom are Americans. The *Ann* is getting everything ready for her passage to Plymouth and I shall go down tomorrow morning and examine the men, after which I expect she will immediately proceed in obedience to their Lordships' orders. I beg also that you will be pleased to inform their Lordships that the Jamaica Fleet is expected to arrive daily, and if it is their pleasure I shall send the *Enchantress* off Lundy Island to endeavour to obtain such men as are fit for the service, but I beg at the same time to observe that it will be necessary that the *Ant* or some other vessel should be at this port during the absence of the *Enchantress*.

[Adm 1/1725 D194]

571. Lieutenant John Turner to Captain Man Dobson, 2 July 1813

Bristol, 2 July 1813

Sir,

I beg leave to state the case of the Man[James Jones Lawton] named in the margin, impressed by me at sea, should there be any application to their Lordships or you for him.

On my boarding the *Snow Ann* from the West Indies, I immediately mustered the Crew by the Articles, on enquiring for James Lawton, Carpenter, the Master informed me he had put him on shore. I then gave orders to search below and found the above named James Lawton concealed, who was said to be on shore. I therefore of course considered him to be fairly impressed.

I am, Sir...John Turner, Lieutentant.

Enclosure: Bristol 30th June 1813

Sir,

I beg leave to inform you that my son who is a lawfull apprentice as per a copy of the affidavit annexed, was pressed from on Board the *snow Ann* on her arrival in the

Bristol Channel from the West Indies, and have been detained since last Saturday. Captain Dobson, the Regulating officer of this place, gave me to understand an affidavit was necessary and afterwards that he could not release him until I had wrote to the Lords Commissioners of the Navy and receive[d] an answer. Therefore most humbly beg the favour of you to state to their Lordships of his retention and trust they will order his discharge for which I shall ever consider myself under the greatest obligation, I am Sir...James Lawton.

Enclosure: James Lawton, shipwright of the parish of Bedminster in the County of Somerset, maketh oath and saith that James Jones Lawton, his son, is his lawful apprentice, as by Indentures being dated the eighth day of September one thousand eight hundred and six, to learn the art and trade of that of a shipwright and that the said James Jones Lawton never was in the Sea Service or imployed in any Boat or Barge on any River or other waters previous to the date of his indentures aforesaid. Sworn at the Council House the 28 day of June 1813, before me, David Evans, James Lawton.

Enclosure: No 3 Wapping Bristol
Sir,

Yesterday I received an answer saying that there Lordships could not discharge my son & apprentice as he concealed himself, but I hope there Lordships will recollect that he is but a youth and timid, and as they have discharged the others they, I hope, will take it into consideration and grant him his discharge, as from him myself and family receive great part of our support, as I had the misfortune to break my Leg and hurt my foot so bad that I am not able to work as I have done as my leg is waisted. I should not have let him gone to sea but work was very slack and therefore was obliged to let him go for the support of myself and family, having a wife and 2 more children to maintain. I beg leave to inform their Lordships also that it[is] rather a hard Case as I was obliged to get 4 substitutes for another son that was pressed here at a great expense, and coming home the next voyage[he] was taken by americans and turned adrift, 16 of them in a boat and they got to Halifax strip'd of everything, so that when he came home I was oblig'd to Cloath and maintain him till he could get a ship.[I] was obliged also a few years ago to provide a substitute for myself in the Militia at a great expense which reduced me to the necessity of letting him go to sea, as it[h]as always been understood that a shipwright's apprentice was not pressible, as he is not bound to the sea service and journeymen are afraid to go because of the press. I hope therefore there Lordships will reconsider the Case and grant the favour of discharge as for Captain saying he was gone on shore was with a view to save him I suppose. Begging their Lordships to consider my case hope they will grant my request and shall ever be bound and in duty pray...James Lawton

Margin: Admiralty refused to discharge him.

[Adm 1/1735 D197]

572. Captain Man Dobson to J.W. Croker, 9 July 1813

Bristol, 9th July 1813

Sir,

I beg you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that William Davis, a Cooper, was Impressed by the *Ann* Tender out of the West India convoy and is sent round to Plymouth in her. I saw the man before she sailed and thought he was fit for the service and would be a useful hand. The Surgeon also examined him. From what I heard I could not determine how long he had been at sea. I return the inclosures, and I have the honor to be...Man Dobson

Margin: refuse discharge

Enclosure: Bristol 5 July 1813

Honorable Sir,

I beg leave to Request You in behalf of my son William Davis (a Cooper) by this time taken round to Plymouth; was impressed from on board the *Ulysses* of Bristol when in Kingroad on the 25 June & sent on board the *Ann* Tender. He had been considered unfit for the Military, namely the Local[Militia] having been examined in the Council House of Bristol about two years ago & rejected on account of a Catarrh[cataract] on his right Eye from a hurt when a Child, by which means he lost the sight thereof, & which had likewise so injured the other as in a very imperfect manner to be able to discern lines necessary to be seen by a Cooper when at work. Hope therefore, Honorable Sir, upon the Statement of this his Case (being real fact) as on further examination will be fully evinced. And that through the favour of your interference he will be liberated, seeing that Men of such description & with such faults are (I presume) improper also for Sea Service.

You noticing my Request & doing the needful toward his release will be esteemed & acknowledged with utmost thankfulness, a signal favour conferred on, Your long afflicted & humble servant, John Davis.

[Adm 1/1735 D215]

573. Captain Man Dobson to J.W. Croker, 10 July 1813

Bristol, 10th July 1813

Sir,

You will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that statement of the case of John Bowland, carpenter of the *Kingston*, by Lieutenant Rowe, which I herewith inclose.

You will also be pleased to inform their Lordships that I have made enquiry and find that in practice the Voyage of the Ships belonging to this port has always been considered to end when they arrive in Kingroad, and if any part of the crews are ever employed to assist in bringing the ships upon the Avon, they are paid for the same as harbour duty men. It is also necessary to inform their Lordships that this port employs at present nearly seventy Ships in the West India trade, and it appears that the Carpenters have been permitted to go backwards and forwards without being impressed for many years back, and have thereby destroyed so far, the nursery for Ships Carpenters at Sea to the injury of His Majesty's Service. That

the merchants here are very much alarmed, or much disaffected at this innovation, saying if it continues that they will not be able to obtain Carpenters for their Ships.

I also beg leave to observe that out of twenty seven Ships which have arrived in the two Convoys, only three Carpenters have been impressed, namely, John Bowland, James Guppy, and James Luten, the rest have all escaped on shore.

A statement of the case of John Bowland, otherwise Bowbier, on board HMS *Enchantress*, Lieut. John Rowe, King road the 9th of July 1813

John Bowland, otherwise Bowbier, Impressed by Lieut Rowe, commander of HMS *Enchantress* on the 1st July 1813 from outward the ship Kingston was protected as Carpenter out and home. When impressed the said Ship was at Anchor in safety in Kingroad where her voyage ends. The Master of the Kingston was gone to Bristol and had left her in charge of the Harbour Pilot. It has been the custom at this Port to bear the Ships' Carpenters on the books of one of the shipwrights yards the moment the Vessel arrives at the Quay, where they find an asylum from the impress, until the Vessel was ready to proceed on her outward bound voyage again. John Bowland, otherwise Bowbier, is 49 years of age, a stout able man, well fit for the Service, and been at sea 13 years. Joshua Rowe, Lieutenant and Commander.

Enclosure: Rodney Place, Clifton, July 6th.

Sir, It is many years since I had the pleasure of knowing you in Dublin & I shall be most happy if our former acquaintance will apologize to you for the liberty of the present application.

A very valuable servant of mine is in the greatest distress from his brother having been pressed into His Majesty's Service last week (immediately upon his return from the West Indies.) His name is John Bowland, carpenter on board the *Kingston* Merchantman. Upon his account, I am much interested in wishing his discharge, He is surely to come forward with solution. Money may be required ...to procure substitutes, & you will my much oblige me by obtaining his discharge from the Service. I beg leave to apologise for this trouble...& that you will believe me to be, Sir, your very sincere friend & humble servant, M Strongfort.

[Adm 1/1735 D215]

574. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 10 July 1813

Bristol 10th July 1813

Sir,

I herewith enclose Lieutenant Rowe's report of the case of John Randals, a blackman, which you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. I also beg that you will inform their Lordships that the *Enchantress* Impressed fewer Men than called themselves Americans who I examined. Three of them were sent to Prison and the above John Randals proved to be a very stout able man, married at Bristol, and reckoned one of the best Seamen out of the port. I therefore ordered him to be kept on board the *Enchantress*.

It may not be improper to inclose for their Lordships' information a note I received from Lieutenant Campbell in consequence of his having seen the behaviour of Mr Cranidge, who applied to me respecting this Man before he wrote to their Lordships, when he was troublesome and ill conducted, as he has been on other occasions.

1st enclosure: A statement of the Case of John Randle.

He was impressed by Lieutenant J L Rowe, commander of His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* on the 1st of July 1813 from on board the ship *Kingston*. He had no protection, calls himself an American and acknowledged he is married to an English Woman who is at present residing with her children at Bristol. He is 29 years of age, a stout able man, has been 9 years at sea and received £4-10s per month on board the *Kingston*, which is the highest wages given out of this Port. He is in every respect well calculated to serve in His Majesty's Fleet as an able seaman.

Jonathan Rowe, Lieut and Commander.

2nd enclosure: Bristol 8th July 1813

Sir,

Having seen the conduct of Mr Cranidge the other day at the Randevous I could not help wishing to know his general character. I find that he keeps a petty school in Taylors Court, Bristol. He is notorious for his violent democrattick principals. He was the determined supporter of Mr Hunt's extravagant conduct at the last election at this place. He is the scribe and lawier[lawyer] for all sailors who are impressed, and the advocate of every disaffected person...

J Campbell, Lieutenant R.N.

3rd enclosure: Academy St Augustine's Quay, Bristol, July 6th 1813

My Lords,

It is with the deepest reluctance I now presume to address your Lordships but not having received that Justice which in my humble opinion an injured man requires from regulating Capt. Dobson of this port, I having applied to him this day for the discharge of John Rendals, a Man of Colour and a Native of the United Provinces of America, who was impressed from on Board the *New Kingston* West India man of this port a few days ago (on board of which he was Cook he being disabled from other Service as will appear by his Discharge from His Majesty's Ship, *Salvador del Mundo*, and permit from the American consulate Plymouth both now in my hands, copies of which I have the honor herewith to transmit for your Lordships perusal.

*[there follows a letter of discharge signed by Captain John Dilkes, 4 Sept 1804, describing Rendals or Randle as aged 20, 5 feet 11 ½ inches tall, of a Black Complexion, "having been surveyed and found unserviceable by Reason of a Lame Leg." Cranidge also transcribed a note from the American consul in Plymouth, 21 September 1804, permitting him to proceed to join the *Three Brothers* Armed Tender in Bristol.]

Notwithstanding the above, the said John Randal is retained on Board His Majestys receiving ship *Enchantress* at this port. I therefore presume to request that your Lordships will be pleased to take this Case into your Lordships consideration and forthwith command his discharge. I am Your Lordships Obedt. Humble Servant, John Cranidge.

Margin: Admiralty advise to send him to Plymouth

[Adm 1/1735 D221]

575. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 31 July 1813

Bristol 31st July 1813

I have to request that you will be pleased to lay before my Lords...a Register of Watermen sent herewith which I have this day received from Mr Lunell, Master of the Society of Merchants, therein will be found two hundred names of very fine men, who are known by the name of Pill Watermen as mentioned in Mr Castle's letter, the Mayor of Bristol, to you the twelfth of June.

I also beg you will please to inform their Lordships that when I first made enquiry about the Watermen in the beginning of May, their number was only one hundred and thirty-two, and that on the nine of June, at a meeting of the Mayor &c, as will appear by the advertisement in the *Bristol Mercury* [19 July 1813]...the number was increased to two hundred.

As their Lordships' proposal dated the fourth of June to furnish one man in ten to protect the rest has not been attended to by the Corporation, I therefore send the register for their inspection, that they may be the better able to see the kind of men who are registered.

Watermen of this description are absolutely necessary for the conducting of Vessels in the River Avon with their Boats &c, but they should certainly contribute agreeable to the practice of Watermen in other Ports, in number, and length of time. Margin: direct him to choose the ablest and fittest of these men to be impress till he has got the number which the quota would have assented to.

[Adm 1/1735 D269]

576. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 25 August 1813

Bristol, 25 Aug 1813

You will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that William Hanmore was a registered Pill waterman and impressed agreeable to their Lordships order to obtain the Quota from that body. The situation of his mother pointed out in her petition, I believe to be correct. I had before enquired respecting it and intended to have stated the same to their Lordships before the men were sent round to Plymouth, as also that of William Carter, another youth of seventeen years of age, the mother and family of whom are nearly in the same situation as that of Hanmore, and to request their Lordships order to discharge these two men and take others in their stead. Indeed I did hope the Corporation and Merchants would have made some proposal to their Lordships to permit those men that were impressed to be exchanged for volunteers from the same body by giving a bounty to the young men whom it might have suited to serve in His Majesty's Navy, but I am sorry to think from this and other circumstances that the Corporation and Merchants of

Bristol will not do anything towards raising men for His Majesty's Navy but what they are obliged to do.

Their Lordships commends of 16th July respecting protections to the Carpenters of the Ships employed in the West Indies trade & I communicated to Mr. Castle, the Mayor of Bristol, on the 17th July by letter, but I have not yet received any answer of any kind from him, or the Merchants and Ship Owners on the subject.

Margin: refer him again to his instructions by which he will perceive the illegality of impressing youths under 18 yrs of age.

Enclosure: To the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
The Humble Petition of Jane Hanmore, widow, sheweth,

That your petitioner's Husband was a Pill Pilot who supported himself and his family by his Industry, that about Five years ago he had the misfortune to lose his Skiff which he was never able to replace but still through his Good Character as a Pilot he was enabled to support himself & children in a decent manner. That in April last your petitioner had the misfortune to lose her said Husband and was left a disconsolate widow with six children and her eldest son William (now only seventeen years of age) was the only support of herself and the younger branches of her family.

That on the 13th of August the said son William was impressed & is now on board the Tender at Pill, although he has never been a voyage at Sea. That by this Calamity your petitioner is deprived of her only support & that of her Infant children and without his release they will be all in danger of starving. She therefore humbly hopes that this, her most distressing case, will be taken into serious consideration & that your Lordships will give an order for his discharge. And your petitioner as in duty bound will every pray, Jane Hanmore.

We whose names are hereunto subscribed do hereby certify that the foregoing statement is correct and do recommend the widow accordingly as a proper object of commiseration.

Pill 18 August 1813

Rev. Geo Wilkins, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Somerset

R Wilkins, vicar of St George's Somerset

N Ruddock, curate of St George's near Pill, Somerset

Wm Hodges, church warden.

Enclosure to R H Davis, Esquire, MP
Walton Castle.

Sir I take the liberty of enclosing the Petition of Jane Hanmore of Pill, widow, who has lately had her son Impressed although he has never been[on] a Voyage to Sea, by your taking the trouble to recommend this extreemly hard case. I have no doubt of succeeding in procuring the release of the young man, who is the Principal Support of a Helpless Family, having known the widow & her late husband nearly thirty years causes me to interest myself on her behalf, and any testimony of Good Character I will readily give. Your attention to this request will very much oblige, Sir,
Your very humble servant, Eusebius Holmes.

***577. Impressing a master at the quay, August 1813**

25 Aug 1813 Captain Dobson wrote a letter concerning Wm Blake, the purported master of the sloop *Friends* bound for Barnstaple, who was impressed by Lieutenant Pitman on 31 July while coiling the ropes of the vessel on the quayside. A further letter, dated 23 Sept 1813, revealed that John Leworthy was the true master of the *Friends*. Blake was only “a feigned master by the Custom house officers &c for the purpose of protecting him from the impress, which is a practice very much in use around the Coast.”

[Adm 1/1736 D313, D357]

578. Impressing a registered Pill waterman, August 1813

In Aug 1813, Richard Knight, registered Pill waterman, was impressed for the quota.

Enclosure: John Shipton to the Secretary of the Admiralty,
Sir,

Richard Knight of Pill, in the Parish of St George County of Somerset, has been impressed by the Lieutenant of HM Ship *Enchantress*, lying in King Road. His master, James Pugh, applies to me as a Magistrate of the District to try to get him free. The Lieutenant has been applied to and my application must be made at the Admiralty. I therefore beg leave to inclose for your inspection the Indentures of the said Parties and if you think it should be his Protection will thank you to obtain his discharge. It is signed by Sir Abraham Elton and myself and I will thank you to return it for the benefit of the Master.

From experience I know I cannot obtain admission to Captain Dobson, the regulating Captain, on such a subject. I therefore trust you will excuse my troubling you as well as any want of from in the manner of the application. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant. John Shipton, Portishead, near Bristol, August 19th 1813.

PS I really should not trouble you, Sir, if I have to address the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty which I hope you will suffer to be my apology.

[Adm 1/1736 D317]

579. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 1 September 1813

Bristol, 1 Sept 1813

Sir,

You will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that Joseph Simmons was a Registered Pill waterman, impressed for the quota. That he had been employed on the Rivers upwards of three years, and his being registered was evidently to protect him from being impressed. He is a very fine young man and fit for his Majesty's Service at Sea.

I have made enquiry respecting his finding a substitute in the Militia, but I have not been able to learn in what way, nor what was paid by him for that purpose, to enable me to lay the same before their Lordships.

(Description: 26 years of age 3 years and upwards at sea, rated ordinary seaman. Discharge refused)

Enclosure: To the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
The Humble Petition of Joseph Simmons, Sheweth

The your Petitioner was drawn to serve in the Somerset Militia on the 9th day of October 1807, that he has a wife and four children whose wholly dependence is intirely on his Labour, that on account of his wife and family he provided a man to serve in his room, that he was impress on the 13th of August 1813 and sent on board the *Ann* Tender at Pill near Bristol, that the man whom he procured at his own Expense is now serving in the Army. He most humbly prays your Lordships to take the Hart[Hard] Case into Consideration and Permit of his Discharge and restore him to his Starving wife and children.

And as in duty bound will ever pray, Joseph Simmons, 23 August 1813.

Please to address your Lordships answer to my wife Suanna Simmons, Pill, near Bristol,

[Adm 1/1736 D322]

***580. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 6 September 1813**

Captain Dobson sent the Admiralty a list of fictitious masters impressed in Bristol. The comment in the margin talked of “the propriety of some general instruction to the Collectors of the Customs by which an end might be put to a practice so injurious to his Majesty’s Service.”

[Adm 1/1736 D335]

581. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 13 September 1813

Captain Dobson impressed Evan Francis, whose protection was thought to be fraudulent. He also noted the case of William Hughes, an apprentice who was impressed some time ago, whose case would serve, said Dobson, “to show how little dependence is to be placed in affidavits made by that class of people in that part of the Empire, indeed instances offer daily in the want of morality in that respect.”

(*A subsequent letter, dated 13 October 1813, reveals a writ of habeas corpus had been issued for the body of Evan Francis.)

[Adm 1/1736 D346, 463]

***582. The impressment of fishermen with protections, September 1813**

Letter of 20 Sept 1813: Lieutenant Pitman impressed Peter Jones and Christopher Claxton, two fishermen with protections, whose ages were

incorrectly stated “by about a year, they being older.” Jones’ vessel was at Tenby and Claxton’s at Pill. The fishing season had passed and Dobson thought “they did not even intend to rejoin their vessels at present, the vessel to which Claxton did belong is of Bristol not of Dartmouth. They are two very fine young men, and well adapted for his Majesty’s Service.”

Margin: Admiralty agreed – refuse discharge.

[Adm 1/1736 D 356]

583. Lieutenant William Pitman to Captain Man Dobson, 3 October 1813

Bristol 3rd Oct 1813

Sir,

I beg leave to state to you...that William Mansfield (description in the margin) was impressed on the morning of the 27th Ultimo and on his being regulated by you, Sir, he said that he was an apprentice to a Mr Clutsome, Master of the ship *Ocean* of this port, and on his indentures being produced, it stated that he was only thirteen years old when he was bound. But on applying to the Rector of the parish of St George’s near Pill, it appears by the register of the said parish that he was eighteen years of age the 27th of last January, in consequence of which he was examined by the surgeon and being found a stout healthy young man, he was sent by your directions on board His Majesty’s Ship *Enchantress* as a fit subject for His Majesty’s Navy.

(Description: 5 feet 3 inches high, dark complexion, dark brown hair, hazle eyes, stout man, rated ordinary seaman.)

Enclosure: Bristol 29th September 1813

52 Broad Quay

My Lords,

I most humbly beg leave to state to your Lordships that William Mansfield, my son, was on the 27th instant impressed into his Majesty’s Service from the ship *Ocean*, George Clutson, master to whom he was an apprentice and just return’d from his second voyage, but being upwards of eighteen years of age cannot be claim’d as an apprentice. I therefore must humbly beg your Lordships will be pleased to grant his discharge by paying such a sum of money as your Lordships may in your wisdom and goodness think proper. I also most humbly beg to state to your Lordships that it is thro the exertions of this my son I am chiefly supported, being old and entirely incapable of doing anything to support myself, and having three young children, the oldest but just turn’d fourteen. Most humbly beg your Lordships will take my distress’d case into your humane consideration and grant the request of,

My Lords, your lordships’ most obedient humble servant,
Hannah Mansfield

*Margin: Admiralty retained Mansfield.

[Adm 1/1736 D377]

584. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 3 October 1813

Bristol 3 Oct 1813

Sir,

I have to request that you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the twenty Registered Pill Watermen for the Quota were impressed by the joint exertions of the Gangs and the people belonging to the *Enchantress* and *Ann* Tender under the directions of Lieutenants Rowe and Turner, and as they deserve credit for the manner the same was executed, I have to request their Lordships will be pleased to direct the reward to be paid for impressing the said twenty men to the Gangs, to the *Enchantress* and to the *Ann*, in equal proportions.

*Margin: Admiralty would not oblige until a return was made.

[Adm 1/1736 D378]

585. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 21 October 1813

Bristol 21 Oct 1813

Sir, I have the honor to receive a copy of the report of the surveying captain at Plymouth on the new raised men from Bristol as contained in your letter of the 13th instant, and having examined and duly considered the same, I have to request that you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the inclosed list which contains the names of part of the men whose ratings have been altered. The Pill men, in addition to the time they have been watermen, have most of them been used from their infancy to be in yawls and skiffs, and that they intirely navigate and work the Vessels using this port from Kingroad to Bristol. Even from much further to the westward frequently, and that they have been used to be employed on board Vessels almost every day. The true qualifications of men are difficult to be found out from their wish to disguise themselves, but the qualifications of the Pill watermen could not be known so well anywhere as in Bristol. I therefore trust their Lordships will think proper to order them to be rated as is stated in the inclosed list in justice to them, and consequently for the good of the Service....

I beg also to observe for their Lordships' information that the most strict attention is paid by me and the officers employed here, and that no Man or Boy is sent down to the Tender from the Rendezvous without being particularly inspected by the Surgeon, the Lieutenants, and myself, and as I have previous to being placed here had considerable experience in examining men, and reconsidering the Cases of the different Men who were raised here and discharged at Plymouth, I am of opinion that they were all fit for the King's Naval Service,

(*A list of 14 registered Pill watermen revealed that 6 were 18–19 years and a further 6, 20–24 years. Their experience on the river ran from 3 years to 13, and one John Hall, aged 18, had been on the river “since he was able to do anything.” Over half had 10 years experience on the Avon.)

[Adm 1/1736 D409]

586. Lieutenant William Pitman to Captain Man Dobson, 6 November 1813

Bristol 6 Nov 1813

Sir,

I beg leave to state to you...that John Reid, was impressed on the 31st ultimo out of the Ship Public House in Steep Street by information and on his being regulated by you, Sir, the next morning he stated that he had been to Sea all his Lifetime and was formerly master of a sloop trading from this port to Guernsey, but that he was now Master of the above mentioned Public House, but not being able to produce any License for the said House, or any other protection, notwithstanding he was kept at the rendezvous two days for that purpose, he was examined by the surgeon and being found a stout healthy young man he was sent by your directions on board HMS *Enchantress* as a fit subject for His Majesty's Navy.

I have the honor to be.. W Pitman, Lieutenant.

[*description: 25 years of age, 5 feet 3 ½ inches tall, fair complexion, light brown hair, blue eyes, stout made, rated able seaman.]

Enclosure: Bristol 4 November 1813

My Lords,

I beg leave to acquaint your Lordships that thro a malicious and imprudent manner I was on the 31st Ult. informed against and impressed into his Majesty's Service. I had, My Lords, the week previous to my impressment paid the sum of 130 pounds for my entrance and for the fixtures of a house in the publick line of business in this City. I had also, My Lords, paid a considerable sum for the stock of spirits now on the premises and unavoidably left to the care of and in charge of an inexperienced servant. I have, my Lords, since my impressment been arrested and am now in the confinement in the Sheriff's Ward of this City, my property going from me in a very strange and Cruel manner, no relation to assist in my business, nor have I, My Lords, any other resource than to pay[if] your lordships will be pleased to grant my discharge from the service by my paying into the hands of the Rt. Honble. the Treasurer of the Navy the sum of £60 even 80 pounds. If your Lordships will be pleased to direct Captain Dobson the regulating officer here to examin[e] into the truth of this my statement, your lordships will find I am really no unworthy of your compassion.

I am, my Lords, your Lordships obedt. Humble servant,
John Reid, Bell Inn, Broad Quay.

Margin: discharge for £80

[Adm 1/1736 D 443]

587. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 24 November 1813

Bristol, 24th Nov 1813

The Trade in the River Severn and its dependencies is very extensively carried on to the interior of the Country in flat vessels called Trows, the Tonnage employed

is considerable and the Men to navigate them in number great, for which body no assistance comparatively has been derived during the War for the King's Service, and by the increase of this Trade the Coasting trade from hence to London &c is diminished.

The men employed in the Trows are stout and athletic and probably the finest body of Men for their number in the Country and there is reason to believe that a great many Seamen and deserters from his Majesty's Ships are amongst them. They are required to be stout as they load and unload their Vessels themselves, and they are such Men as are wanted for the lower Yards of large ships &c.

The Trows in general all come to the Port of Bristol occasionally. They may be divided into three classes. The First, or largest Class are in number about 26, their tonnage from 150 to 170 Tons. These Vessels are all as well Rigged by their own people as any Vessels can be. Their Topsail Yards are rigged aloft and every thing about them show the work of Seamen....The second class are in number about 34, their tonnage from 110 to 130 tons. They are in every respect as complete in their Riggings as the larger class and have a Crew of seven Men and a Master. The third Class in number about one hundred and twenty, their Tonnage 50 to 100 Tons. They are rigged in the same way, in general as the first and second class, only that their topsail yards are not rigged aloft, and they are not so neat in appearance in regard to their Rigging. They have a crew on an average of about four men and the Master. The number of Trows and Men will therefore be...180 Trows...952 men.

It appears by an order of their Lordships dated the 25th of April 1806 to Captain Barker that he was to propose to the Trowmen to furnish for his Majesty's Naval Service one man in ten of such of their bodies as were liable to be imprest. But from the best information I have been able to obtain about fifty men only since that time have been furnished for Trow Men, Market Boat Men Coasting sloops &c. It even does not appear that any of these were Trowman, but men of a very inferior description, for each of whom about eleven pounds on an average was paid, some paying seven pounds and others from that to fifteen pounds to engage the Men to volunteer into His Majesty's Navy as substitutes for Trowmen &c. It does not appear that any trow has furnished substitutes twice during the war in this manner.

None of the Trows have furnished substitutes since I have been here for I have always had it in contemplation to lay the particulars of my enquiries to their Lordships.

It is considered by the owners of the Trows that the Vessels protect the Men, as the Protections are for one, two, three or more Trows and it frequently happens that a Man sells his situation to some other person after serving sometime in a Trow, by which very great abuses prevail. But everything respecting the Trows is kept by their owners as much as possible from the Officers employed in raising Men for the King's Service, and the Vessels have not even been used to be visited and examined by the officers employed here. The present protections cannot well be understood. The time for which they were granted being so differently represented by the several owners of the Trows and they almost all expect some new regulation to take place.

I therefore beg leave to suggest that a notice should be given by order of their Lordships to the owner of the Trows that all protections formerly granted to them under whatever circumstances will cease with this year, calling upon them at the same time to furnish one Man in Ten of the number they each employ, excepting always the Master, as a Quota to protect the remainder, as proposed by their Lordships to Mr. Castle the Mayor of Bristol Jan the 4th 1813, the Men so furnished

to be approved by the regulating officer at Bristol and protections granted to the Men protected thereby and individually.

Bristol, November 24, 1813 Man Dobson.

[Adm 1736 D473]

588. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 23 December 1813

*There was an anonymous report, dated 13 December, on the conduct of Lieut Jonathan Rowe, the commanding officer of HMS *Enchantress*. Dobson was ordered to inquire and report on the allegations.

Bristol 23 Dec 1813

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that agreeable to their orders of the 13th instant I went down on the 21st instant to make the enumeration, the report of which I herewith inclose which you will be pleased to lay before their Lordships, as also a book of the standing regulations of the *Enchantress* which the master has about him for his guidance &c in which the mode of calling up and serving out provisions is directed, also an exact report, signed by the officers, of the alterations made in the Bulk Head, and the remains of Plank and Nails now of board the *Enchantress* signed by the Clerk and the Carpenter.

I beg also to assure their Lordships that when I was on board to examine the new raised men on the 15th ultimo, before the *Ann* Tender sailed, I went particularly through every part of the *Enchantress*, press room &c and found her in the very best order. I then told the Lieutenant how much I was satisfied with the state she was in, the people &c.

I return the inclosures and I have the honor to be....Man Dobson

Enclosure: Report of an enquiry respecting an Anonymous letter dated the 10th instant complaining of the conduct of Lieutenant Rowe of the *Enchantress*.

Mr Harris, the 2nd Master, answered as follows: The Lieutenant Rowe always lived on board, that from June the time the *Enchantress* arrived from Plymouth he had not slept on shore above eight or nine times in all, and never two nights together, that from the time the *Ann* Tender sailed in September he had not slept on shore for eight or nine weeks.

The fresh Beef is always cut up and served publicly and none allowed to be picked for any person, none that he knows of for the Lieutenant, but that he had almost always one shin every week, and sometimes two shins in a week. That the Beef was in general very good, but when it had the least appearance of being otherwise, the Lieutenant sent a public message to the Contractor respecting it, never knew it to be so bad[but] once or twice ...

I next had the Ship's Company called together and made the letter known to them. They informed me on all the points that came within their knowledge or concerned them, in the same manner as the Officers had done, that they were perfectly satisfied with their treatment, with the manner the provisions and fresh Beef were cut up and

served, that the Lieutenant lived on board, they did not know of provisions being sent on shore, or of any Man's Allowance being stopped when he had leave, and many of them expressed their concern that such an unjust complaint should have been made.

I next had the new raised Men called together on deck who declared their satisfaction with their treatment on board, and as far as concerned them to the same purport as the Officers and Ship's Company.

The Officers were examined separately each being placed afterwards where he could have no communication with those who had not been examined.

The Lieutenant was upon deck during the time I examined the Officers below in the Cabin, with Lieutenant Pitman who I took with me, and both the Lieutenants were together as before in the Cabin during the time I examined the people upon deck, the whole took up about two hours, and no person whatever knew what I was about to do until Lieutenant Rowe received my orders to afford me every facility in executing their Lordships' Orders, which was delivered to him by Lieutenant Pitman sealed up.

From all which there does not appear even a shadow of cause of complaint against the Lieutenant, but on the contrary. Bristol, December 23rd 1813, Man Dobson.

[Adm 1/1736 D 521]

589. Lieutenant William Pitman to Captain Man Dobson, 28 December 1813

Bristol 28 Dec 1813

Sir,

I beg leave to state to you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that George Hopwood (description in the margin) was impressed the 10th instant out of a Public House in consequence of an information from a master and owner of one of the trows saying that he had left his trow and would not join her again, and on his being regulated by you, Sir, the next morning, he produced no protection. He was therefore examined by the surgeon, and being found a stout healthy young man, he was sent by your direction on board HMS *Enchantress* as a fit subject for His Majesty's Navy.

Margin: 30 Years of Age, 6 feet high, Brown complexion, Dark Hair, Hazle eyes, employed in the trow 20 years, rated ordinary.

Enclosure: The Humble Petition of Benjamin Hopwood.

Sheweth That his son George Hopwood was Impressed in Bristol about the 12th instant, that he is torn away from a wife and 3 small children whose whole dependence was on his labour for Support, that he has been master of a vessel 15 years and that Your Petitioner has purchest the Discharge of 2 of his sons since the war, which was attended with very great expense after they were impressed in the West Indies, which has rendered him incapable of buying his present son off. He most humbly pray your Lordships will be pleased to take the most distressed case into Consideration and the distress that his family is reduced to and admit of his discharge, as he is not adapted for His Majesty's Service having had his Right arm fractured and scarce any use of it. Your Lordships' assistance will be gratefully received. And as in duty bound ever

pray, Benjamin Hopwood, At the Artichoke Inn, St Augustine's Back, Bristol 23 December 1813. Margin: discharge denied

[Adm 1/1736 D 528]

590. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 31 December 1813

Bristol 31 December 1813

Sir, Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 29th instant. I herewith inclose the case of Isaac Kimberly as stated by Lieutenant Reeve, which you will be pleased to lay before their Lordships; also that it has not been ascertained what King's Ships he deserted from. I therefore conclude the information to be doubtful. I return the inclosed, and I have the honour to be...Man Dobson.

Enclosure: Bristol 27 December 1813

Sir,

I take the liberty to state to you that the Ship *St Vincent* now laying in Kingroad under the convoy of H.M. Brig *Conquest*, bound for Cork & St Vincent, was on the 24th instate boarded by Lieutenant Roe of the *Enchantress* when he impressed Isaac Kimberly, the boatswain of the ship, whose name and description was then on the Admiralty Protection whereby the Ship has lost a very trusty officer. I trust, Sir, that if Lieutenant Roe has acted under a wrong representation of this Man that their Lordships will please to direct that he be discharged. I am, Sir...James Drew

2nd enclosure: A Statement of the Case of Issac Kimberly, Seaman on HMS *Enchantress*, by Lieutenant Rowe & Lieutenant Homans, Broad Pill, 28th December 1813

Isaac Kimberly was impressed on the 24th of December 1813 by Mr Norris, Master of HMS *Enchantress* under my command from the *Saint Vincent* merchant ship laying in Kingroad, in consequence of a written information sent to the Commander of the *Enchantress* of his being a deserter from His Majesty's Service. When apprehended, he wished to prove himself an American, in addition to which the Mate of the *St Vincent* told the Officer who impressed him that if he had known it five minutes sooner he should not have taken the man, as he would have taken good care to have stowed him away where he would not have found him. Isaac Kimberly is aged about 31 years, 5 feet 7 ½ inches high, a very stout robust man, and a prime Seaman.

[Adm 1/1737 D1]

591. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 3 January 1814

Bristol January 3rd 1814

Sir,

I inclose herewith a report ...on John Clark seaman and a report of the Surgeon of the *Enchantress* on John Tomkins, seaman and William Pritchard a boy, both which I

believe to be correct; the two latter were not surveyed in consequence of it not being proper to expose them on the river in bringing them to Bristol.

(* Dobson believed they should be discharged.)

Enclosure; A statement of the case of John Tompkins, seaman, on board HMS *Enchantress*, Lieut. Rowe...Commander, Broad Pill, 2nd January 1814

John Tompkins, seamen, complained of violent pains in his breast and shortness of breath; also a violent pain in his back in consequence of a hurt which he says he secured about two years ago, and by any exercise the spermatic hard swells considerably and lasts some days before it again contracts to its proper size. And in my opinion, his kidneys are injured from which he continually labours under an Hectic fever that renders him totally debilitated and unfit for His Majesty's Service. G. Baldamus, Assistant Surgeon.

Having examined John Clark on the 25th of November last, passed him as effective, no complaint appearing at this time, but on re-examination this day we find him labouring under incontinence of Urine, therefore we are jointly of opinion that he is unfit for His Majesty's Service. Charlton Yeatman examining surgeon Bristol and G Baldamus, assistant Surgeon,

Rendezvous House & Jolly Sailor, Bristol 1 January 1814.

A statement of the case of William Pritchard, boy, on board HMS *Enchantress*... Broad Pill, 2nd January 1814.

Wm Pritchard, boy, complains of violent pains in his breast and continual spitting of blood, accompanied by an Hectic cough and fever, an enquiry into his case I find the heart was occasioned by over exertions in lifting about six months ago, for which he has been in an hospital in Bristol. At present he is labouring under the above complaints to a great degree and in my opinion he never will be fit for His Majesty's Service, as by the least exertion his complaints increase considerably. G Baldamus, assistant surgeon, and Lieutenant Roe.

[Adm 1/1737 D7]

592. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 16 January 1814

Bristol, 16 Jan 1814

I herewith inclose the case of Henry Forrest, said to be the Master of the *Fair Trader* as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. I also inclose a Register of the Vessel by which their Lordships will perceive that Benjamin Forrest, Mariner, is owner, that William and Henry Forrest are also both on the Register as Master, all these three people belonged to the vessel at the time of the impressment of Henry. I therefore beg leave to submit to their Lordships that both the young men were liable to be impressed as the Vessel truly had three Masters, but William having paid £80 to find substitutes, he is by that protected. I likewise inclose his certificate of discharge, which is not signed by the Captain by whom he was discharged.

Henry Forrest is a very fine young man, is very fit for the King's Service and bore a conspicuous part in the rescue which brought him into notice and caused the Register to be examined, which proved him to be a fictitious master.

Margin: refuse discharge

*A further letter from Dobson, dated 25 January, 1814, said that he was sure that Benjamin Forrest was the true master of the vessel and the sons had only been endorsed as such to try to protect them from the press, "a fraud that is permitted to a considerable extent on this part of the Coast, which is a great evil, as it serves to destroy the Nursery of Seamen." The Forrest case, he continued, was much the same as that of William Blake, "for whom Mr Methuen, the Mayor of Barnstaple, gave their Lordships much trouble." Further depositions by the midshipmen also confirmed that Henry Forrest was one of the principal agitators in the mob that rescued an Irish recruit.

[Adm 1/1737 D24, 42]

593. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 16 January 1814

Bristol, 16 Jan 1814

Sir,

I have the honor herewith to inclose the statement of Lieutenant Pitman in the rescue of a man impressed by him and a declaration by each of the two Men of the Gang from whom the man was rescued...after Mr Hunt was identified, he came to the Rendezvous with a view of inducing me to take notice of his conduct, which he thought to be very innocent, or rather praiseworthy, as he acted, he said, in the affair out of humanity &c &c and gave no reason to believe he is very hostile to the Kings Service. He is a considerable Ironmonger and has respectable commissions, and I am of opinion that this essay of his succeeding without due notice being taken of it, would destroy the service of raising Men at this place.

Enclosure. Bristol January 13th 1814

Sir,

I beg leave to state to you that Henry Forrest (description in the margin) was brought to the Rendezvous by Mr. Parry, Midshipman about twelve o'clock on the morning of the 7th instant in consequence of his having been concerned in encouraging a mob to rescue a man belonging to Lieutenant Campbell's gang whom I had given orders to take to the Rendezvous to be regulated by you. On Forrest being questioned by you, he stated himself to be Master of the Sloop *Fair Trader* belonging to Minehead and produced the Register as such, but it appeared that his Brother, Wm. Forrest, was on the Register as Master before him, and who was then on board the Vessel in consequence of which and of his having been concerned in the rescue of the man, Forrest was examined by the surgeon & being found a fine stout healthy young Man, he was sent by your directions on board HMS *Enchantress* as a fit subject for His Majesty's Navy.

Margin: description. 26 Years of Age, 5 ft. 11 ½ inches high, Brown complexion, Brown hair, Hazle eyes, Stout made, Born at Minehead, several years at sea, rated Ordinary.

2nd enclosure: We request you will be pleased to move their Lordships for the discharge of Henry Forrest, Master of the Sloop *Fair Trader* of Minehead, who has been impressed at Bristol and is now on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*.

Mr. Forrest has been three years Master of the said sloop and as this taking him from the Care and Management of the Vessel subjects the Owners to the Risk of much Injury, we hope their Lordships will direct his Discharge the earliest convenience.

We have the Honor to be...John Nodin & Co.

Spring Garden, January 12th, 1814.

3rd enclosure:

I beg leave to state to you that on the Morning of the 7th instant between the hours of eleven and twelve, as I was going round the Quay with two midshipmen and a party of men belonging to each gang to board different vessels that had arrived in this Port and likewise with a view of falling in with some straggling sailors in the streets, I met on that part of the Quay called the Back, and some distance from the Rendezvous, a fine looking young man dressed in plain clothes and in company with an Older Sailor. On questioning the young man as to who and what he was, he replied that he was an Irishman and Landsman, and that he had never been to sea. I then asked him if would Volunteer. He would not give me a direct answer, and as he appeared to be a suspicious character, I ordered the Midshipman to send two men with him to the Rendezvous to be regulated by you. Accordingly William Pearse and Thomas Williams took charge of him and I proceeded along the Quay and several streets. On my return to the Rendezvous, Mr. Parry the Midshipman, seeing Wm Pearse standing at the door, asked him if the Young Man he was given in charge of was in the Rendezvous. He replied he was not yet, that he had been rescued from them by a great Mob. Parry then asked him if he could point out any Person that had been concerned in rescuing him. Both Pearse and Williams replied they would. He immediately took them and two more men with him and went round the Quay. Pearse and Williams pointed out a young man by the name of Henry Forrest whom they brought to the rendezvous as one of the principal ones concerned and encouraging the Mob in the rescue of the said young man. On his being questioned by you, Sir, he stated himself to be Master of a Vessel and produced his Register as such, saying at the same time that he was not the person who rescued the young man, neither did he know who he was, but that his Friend was now gone round to endeavour to find out who it was, and after you had left the Rendezvous on Friday, Forrest's Mother came and said it was not her son who had rescued the Man, but that she had witnesses who would prove that it was a Mr Hunt, Ironmonger on the Quay, accompanied by a great mob of People and several well dressed Men. Two in particular came up to them and one of them took hold of Pearse by the Handkerchief and called him a Damned Rascal, and asked him by what authority he had to do with this man and made him let go his hold, in consequence of which the man escaped. Pearse said he should know the Gentleman again if he saw him, and on your coming to the Rendezvous on Monday morning, Sir, you directed me to take Pearse and Williams to Mr. Hunt to see if they would recognize him or the Prisoner who rescued the man, to which they were ready to make oath. You directed me on Friday morning

(yesterday) to take them to the Council House for that purpose, but in applying to the Mayor of Bristol and one of the Aldermen present that they would be pleased to swear ...Pearse and Williams, they after reading the statutes, refused, saying that the Law Officers had informed them that no Magistrate had power to swear any Person to such Affidavits, in consequence of which I beg to inclose the statements of the two men, signed by them and witnessed by myself and Mr. Thos. Davis, Midshipman.

I am... Wm Pitman Lieutenant.

4th enclosure: This deponent William Pearse, one of the Press Gang at Bristol, maketh oath and saith that on Friday morning the 7th instant, between eleven and twelve o'clock in the day, he being with Lieutenant Pitman on the Quay, a Man was detained by the Lieutenant, when this deponent and Thomas Williams were ordered to take the said Man to the Rendezvous, that the Man went very unwillingly, and a Mob collected who were encouraged by some respectable looking people, when two of the Gentlemen in particular came up close to them. One of the gentlemen, who proves to be Mr. Richard Hunt, an Ironmonger, laid hold of him the said William Pearse violently by the neck handkerchief and said "You Damned Rascal, shew your authority, what right have you with this Man?" That this deponent immediately made answer that they were ordered by their Lieutenant to take the Man to the Rendezvous. Mr. Hunt then said, "You deserve to be thrown into the Float, You damned Rascal." This deponent also declares that during the time he was held by the Neck by the said Mr. Hunt, the Mob closed, that himself, Thomas Williams and the Man were shoved about by the Mob, and particularly by Mr. Hunt and the other Gentleman, that the Man was at last torn from him and Thomas Williams, and thereby made his escape.

The mark x of William Pearse.

January 15th 1814, declared before us, as the Mayor[Fowler] and Aldermen Tripp would not administer the other, William Pitman, Lieutenant, and Thomas Davis, Midshipman.

[Adm 1/1737 D26]

594. A further affidavit on the Henry Forrest case

Thomas Young, a private in the South Gloucester Regiment of Militia quartered in Bristol, John Cole of the same City, porter, and James Pollard of the same city, an officer of his Majesty's Customs of the City of Bristol aforesaid, severally make oath and say that they are well acquainted with Henry Forrest, Master of the Sloop or Vessel called the *Fair Trader*, belonging to and trading from the Port of Minehead in the Bristol Channel to the port of Bristol who was, as these Deponents are informed and believe lately impressed by the Impress Officers of Bristol into his Majesty's Sea Service. That these deponents were present on Friday last, the seventh day of January...on the Back of the City of Bristol when two men, whom these deponents understood belonged to the Impress Service...impressed a person there. And these Deponents further severally say that two persons, apparently Gentlemen, who were then present interfered on the part of the impressed man and through such interference he was liberated. And these Deponents further severally say...that the said Henry Forrest has since the liberation of the said impressed Man ...been impressed by the said officers ...and that it hath been alledged as the cause of such impressment

was that he the said Henry Forrest had forcibly assisted in the liberation of the said impressed man. And these deponents further severally say that the said Henry Forrest, although he was present, did not in any manner aid or assist in the liberation of the said impressed man or unite or concur with the persons assembled upon that occasion....

Sworn before the Lord Mayor, 12th January 1814,

Young and Cole gave their mark, Pollard signed.

[Adm 1/1737 D42]

595. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 1 February 1814

Bristol 1st Feb 1814

Sir,

In consequence of the Commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 31st Ultimo to discharge Henry Forest if the facts are as represented in the inclosure from Messrs. Noden & Co., I am in consequence to request that you will be pleased to inform their Lordships that the statement appears to set forth that Henry Forrest was the Master of the Sloop, the *Fair Trader*, that William Forrest his elder brother was the Mate, and that Henry did not assist in the Rescue. None of which are facts, as I have the honour to state fully in my letters of 16th and 25th ultimo, Henry being only an Entered Master to protect him from the Impress, the first Master continuing his situation, the Vessel is only forty-eight Tons, therefore does not bare a mate, and Henry was assuredly present as before at the Rescue.

Enclosure:

Induced by the high Respectability of the Gentlemen by whom we are instructed, and from whom we have had the following statement, we request that you will be pleased again to move their Lordships for the Discharge of Henry Forrest, Master of the Sloop *Fair Trader*, impressed at Bristol.

Mr Forrest did not, whether directly or indirectly, interfere in the Liberation of a Man impressed within the City of Bristol, but an Inhabitant thereof who, as we are informed openly and publicly declared his Act therein and that the Person was so impressed by two Seamen unaccompanied by any Officers, released by them upon his interference. Of Mr. Forrest's Innocence therein we trust the affidavit we have already submitted will also satisfy their Lordships.

The Brother of Mr. Forrest is Mate of the Sloop and having been some time since impressed, their Lordships were graciously pleased to grant his Discharge upon payment of Eighty Pounds, the Certificate of which granted him being with other papers in the Custody of his Brother, the Master when impressed, has been taken and retained from him to his very great Injury.

The Father of these two men by a long course of honest Industry enabled himself to become the Owner of this small vessel in which his sons were thus engaged; and together with their Mother, is plunged into the deepest affliction by the present occurrence, heightened by a consciousness of no improper conduct or collusion of any sort whatever; on which we placed the word Reliance from the Respectability of those Gentlemen, Merchants of Bristol and London and Friends and Correspondents by whom the Assertions of their good conduct are corroborated.

Trusting to these good circumstances, what has been before represented, and the Clemency of their Lordships, we hope upon further Investigation and Consideration, they will be pleased to order the Discharge of Mr. Henry Forrest and the Return of the Certificate to his Brother, and to direct the former not to be immediately drafted from on board the Enchantress.

We have the honor to remain...

John Nodin & Co. Spring Gardens, January 28th 1814.

Margin: send this to Mr Dobson & direct him to discharge him if the facts are as represented.

[Adm 1/1737 D 52]

596. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 18 February 1814

Bristol 18 February 1814

Sir, Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 16th instant, to explain what is stated in a letter from Mr. Protheroe and in my conduct towards William Perrot Forrest.

I have to request that you will be pleased to inform their Lordships that Henry Forrest, the youngest son, was a fictitious Master of the Sloop, *Fair Trader*, as stated in my letters of the 16th and 25th ultimo, and 2nd instant, and is the tenth person of that description that has been impressed since I have been here, all of whom their Lordships have thought proper to retain for his Majesty's Service, or to discharge only on paying Money to find substitutes.

William Perrot Forrest, the eldest son, paid £80 to find substitute, and had a Certificate of Discharge, which not being signed by the Captain I inclosed for their Lordships' inspection in my letter of 16th ultimo with the Register, hoping that something might be done to make it a document for the Man's advantage and protection, which Certificate was not returned ...with the Register to Messrs. Nodin & Co. The mother of the young man was several times at the Rendezvous respecting them, when at each time, every information and satisfaction in my power was given to her, and she was told particularly why the Certificate of Discharge was sent to their Lordships and that it would be ultimately returned, also that in the meantime her son would be protected the same as if he had it.

In regard to the charge of harshness at this port in the conducting of the Impress Service, I beg leave to assure their Lordships that I know of none. The practice I pursue is to attend particularly to every case, and to hear every person that has anything to offer upon it, and every day until the business is done. Lieutenant Pitman, the Senior, is most diligent and zealous in his duty, and is of a kind disposition. Lieutenant Campbell, the junior, is a man of good understanding; both of them, I think, incapable of any harshness. At the same time there are many persons here that are very much out of humour at not being able to gain what they wish. The Corporation is very much dissatisfied at the Quota for Pill Watermen and at the whole proceeding[told] the Trow Owners that they are to gain their Quota, and indeed the raising of Men at this port having been nearly lost, all persons concerned feel the alteration so much the more. I inclose an anonymous letter sent to me some

time ago, which is pretty correct, and will in some degree explain to their Lordships the state I found the service in.

I beg leave to observe that I have been informed that Mr. Protheroe was concerned with Mr. Hunt in the rescue as stated in my letter of the 16th ultimo. He is a partner of Mr. Hunt and is, I am told, a relative of Edward Protheroe, the Representative for Bristol. The information respecting the same came from Mrs. Forrest, the mother of the young man, indirectly to me.

I rely upon the rectitude of my conduct and the diligence persevered in to execute their Lordships commands, for their approbation,

Margin: 19 Feb. Send copies to Mr Protheroe for his information.

[Adm 1/1737 D 71]

597. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 19 January 1814

Bristol, 19th January 1814

Sir, Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I herewith inclose the case of William Lee, as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which you will be pleased to lay before their Lordships, and also that I sent to the *Enchantress* for the opinion of Lieutenant Rowe and her surgeon on this man's conduct &c. Since he has been on board the *Enchantress*, previous to which they had not noticed anything particular respecting him, but on being questioned he complained of frequent dizziness, particularly in cold weather, or going aloft.

At the Rendezvous it was observed that his Skull had been punctured, but the examining surgeon, the officers, nor myself did not think it of consequence, he being young and giving so good and clear an account of himself.

1st enclosure: To the Honorable Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
Honourable Sirs, You will have the goodness to excuse me troubling you with this, my son had a misfortune to fall off a Building on the 2nd February 1809 as you will see by the enclosed certificate from the Manchester Infirmary. Since that time he has not been in his proper senses. I have kept him ever since, no one wishing to employ him. He left me some time back in one of his unfortunate deliriums. He, I am informed, has entered on Board HM Ship the *Enchantress* laying off Bristol. Gentlemen, he can be of no service to His Majesty & I, as a mother, am affeared something he might commit in his Frenzy, that may give me very great uneasiness, that is therefore to beg of you (if you do not approve of him, which I think you cannot) to have the goodness to discharge him and send him home, that as a mother may take that Paternal care of him which is my duty to do. If you do not think it proper to discharge him have the goodness to write me your intentions that I may appoint some one to take charge of him after he is so discharged.

Honorable Sirs, I am your most obedient servant Mary Lee

Please to address No 20, Gregson Street, Deansgate, Manchester.

2nd enclosure: Lieutenant Pitman said Lee entered voluntarily at the Rendezvous on 11 December 1813, saying "he was determined to go to sea." He was examined by

the surgeon, and “being found a stout healthy young man” he was sent on board the *Enchantress*.

Margin: description: 22 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, fair complexion, light hair, hazle eyes, born Chesterfield, stout made, trade millwright, rated landman.

[Adm 1/1737 D 35]

598. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 14 February 1814

Bristol 14 Feb 1814

Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 12th instant, I herewith inclose the case of Henry Williams, as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which is correct. I have to request that you will be pleased to lay the same before their Lordships and likewise that this man's case appears to be similar to John Reid, whose case was stated November 7th 1813. Only that Henry Williams was absolutely employed on board the *Sarah* as a Seaman at the time of Impressment. He is a very fit for his Majesties Service.

1st enclosure:

Sir, I am requested to inform your Lordships that Mr. Henry Williams of Alders Key Lane in the City of Bristol, Inn Keeper, and who has been such for the last three years, was on Wednesday last impressed into his Majesty's Service and that he is now on board the *Enchantress* lying at Pill. When impressed he was assisting in the loading of the Brig *Sarah* of this Port with the view thereby of assisting in the support of his Wife and family, & the public hire being at present owing to the high price of Malt and the number of soldiers billeted on Publicans in Bristol a business scarcely adequate to its desired end. It should be observed to your Lordships that Mr. Williams in the early part of his life had been accustomed to the Sea, that before he became a Housekeeper he was Master of the Sloop, *Bristol* from Chester, for about six years, but this circumstance, its presumed, will not justify his present detention. Wishing to be favoured with your Lordships determination upon this cause, whether or not it shall be your pleasure to order his discharge or otherwise. I am...G.H. Walker Bristol 11th Feby. 1814

Margin. 19 Feb., direct him to state whether he had or had not left the sea and was residing there in some other trade or profession...

2nd enclosure:

Elizabeth Williams, wife of Henry Williams of Alders Key Lane in the parish of St Stephen in the City of Bristol, maketh oath and saith that her said Husband hath kept a Public House called the King of Prussia on Alders Key Lane aforesaid upwards of three years last past and hath paid Thirty Pounds per annum Rent for the said House and about Fifteen Pounds per annum for Taxes exclusive of his annual Licence as Victualler. And this Deponent saith that her husband, being employed on Wednesday last in the loading a Brig or Vessel at the Quay called the *Sarah* belonging to Mr Lawtell, then outward bound, he was impressed by

Lieutenant Pitman belonging to the impress service and was immediately send on board the *Enchantress* Tender lying at Pill where he is now detained. And this Deponent said that her said husband, previous to his taking and entering on public business had been Master and Commander of the Sloop *Bristol*, Belonging to Chester, and navigated the said Sloop from Chester to Bristol and from Bristol to Chester as a regular trade for about six years and that he had not frequented or followed the seas since he left the Command of the said Ship now upwards of four years last past. And this deponent said that the occasion of her said Husband being on board the Brig *Sarah* at time he was impressed was merely to oblige the said Mr Lawtell...in the absence of a mate of the said Brig, who was absent from illness as she hath heard and believes. And lastly this Deponent saith that he said Husband had declined the Sea Service altogether and did not intend to be and was not employed by the owner of the said Vessel or the Captain thereof in any office or capacity...sworn at the City of Bristol the twelfth day of February one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, before J.W. Fowler, Mayor. Elizabeth Williams

[Adm 1/1737 D63]

***599. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 20 February 1814**

Bristol, 20th Feb 1814: Dobson reported the case of Henry Allen saying he had no knowledge of his age when he was entered. Lieutenant Pitman said Henry Allen entered voluntarily at the Rendezvous on 12th February. He was asked his age and "if his Parents were agreeable for him to go to sea. He said that they were and that he was fourteen years of age, in consequence of which he was examined by the Surgeon and being found a stout healthy Lad he was sent...on board his Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*."

(* The description in the margin said he was 14 years of age, 5ft 6 inches , fair complexion, dark hair, hazel eyes, born in Bristol, rated Boy 3rd class. A certificate from St Philip and St Jacob Bristol, however, said he was born 245 January 1802, to Thomas and Mary Allen.)

Enclosure: I have at present a very essential favour you will be pleas'd to grant me at this period. My son, having Elop'd from his school, has entered himself on board the *Enchantress* at this place. I have to beg you will be pleas'd to Intreceed[intercede] in procuring his Discharge for the Service. I have wrote this post to J. Barrow Esq., Secretary to the Admiralty on the subject, & a line from you to him on that business will Effectually do the business, and I shall allwise[always] consider it as a very particular[favour] granted to, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, Mary Allen, daughter to Sarah Allen, once your washer woman.

*A second letter from Mary Allen, dated 15 February 1814, said Henry "left his parents..some days, being Enter'd away from his school by some other boys who are in the service also. My son is nearly twelve years of age, but of a very weak constitution and very subject to be troubled with fits, and can

be but of little use to the service. ...should be happy to pay every expense in victualling &c.”

Mary Allen, her mark

[Adm 1/1737 D72]

600. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 31 March 1814

* Bristol 31 March 1814: Dobson recommended that HMS *Enchantress* be moved from Broad Pill to King Road in the summer months.

I am now fully of opinion that it is in the best method to succeed in raising Man as Vessels arrive, the best situation for the health and regularity of the people on board, as in Broad Pill in summer the breeze cannot often get freely to the Ship, and that it was from Lieutenant Rowe that I first received the information of the improper situation the *Enchantress* had long remained in, he being the Senior Lieutenant on the Impress Service when I arrived here.

The Man raised at Sea from the Convoys as they arrived last year would have been landed before they reached King Road had not the *Ann* Tender and *Enchantress* cruised for them, and the success would no doubt have been greater if Lieutenant Rowe had executed the duty of impressment from the Ships by boarding them himself in the manner and with the diligence which Lieutenants Turner and Campbell did. Indeed, I never have been satisfied with the duty belonging to the *Enchantress* of raising men, not having been able to induce the Lieutenant to execute it himself.

I likewise beg to inform their Lordships that the new raised men are always sent down by land to Broad Pill and sometimes to the Foot of the Avon, when the *Enchantress* is in King Road at a certain time of tide as settled between the Officers, to which place only a Boat is sent for the Men, and that the *Enchantress*, from the time she came into the Avon in September to December 31st 1813, only impressed four disposable men. She has always had a number of supernumeraries who assist in the necessary duties, and although the *Resolute* has recently sailed, her number victualled today altogether is 51, sufficient to do any thing with her in any weather, and I see no particular danger attending the anchorage in King Road in the summer season, with care and diligence.

I beg their Lordships to know that when Lieutenant Rowe was appointed to the *Enchantress* I had full expectations of his co-operation, diligence and exertion in raising men, and that I have had considerable difficulty with him. I shall await their Lordships' Orders respecting the *Enchantress*, and I have the honor to be...Man Dobson.

Margin: Admiralty approved Dobson's recommendation

*Enclosure: Lieutenant Rowe did not like the decision to move the *Enchantress* into Kingroad. He cited the addition expense of victuals and clothes, the wear and tear on the sails. He said his one open boat was continually employed in fetching beer and provisions.

“I should consequently be unable to board any Fleet, or Vessels, that might arrive, and have no seamen on board to take care of the ship in such a wild a roadstead as Kingroad, which the enclosed extract from the *Enchantress* Logbook will give you an idea of, and which occasioned her to be ordered into the Avon by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Having performed this most necessary part of my duty, to making known to you for their Lordships’ information, the additional expense and bad effects attending the removal of the Ship to Kingroad, I have only further to answer that I will hold myself responsible to raise double to number of Men for His Majesty’s Service while the ship is in a place of security than I can possibly do when she is in Kingroad.

I am... Joshua Rowe, Lieutenant.”

[Adm 1/1737 D120]

601. The impressment of recent British prisoners of war, May 1814

* Bristol, 3 May 1814: Dobson reported on the case of nine men who had been prisoners of war in France and just released. They were impressed by the *Enchantress* on 30th April. He asked the Admiralty whether he should keep them. The Admiralty ordered their discharge. Enclosed was their petition, written on board the *Enchantress*, on 2nd May, 1814.

Sir,

We the undersigned are nine of the unfortunate prisoners that has just arrived from a long Captivity in France, where we have been confined for eight years, and on our way to our native places, we were impressed here on board HMS *Enchantress* and understanding that there is an order not to impress any of them into His Majesty’s Service till such time they had arrived at their places of nativity, we humbly hope that you will take our case into consideration and have the goodness to grant us the liberty to return home, and Sir, you shall suppose that we are very unfit to serve His Majesty after such a long and severe Captivity. Waiting in hopes of your favourable answer, we remain with the greatest respect, your most humble servants,

Mathew Jamieson, John Nelson, Duncan Nicoll, William Payne, Thomas Rees, Willam Barns, Nichol Nennis, James Turner, George Patterson.

Dscriptions:

Duncan Nicoll, 25 years, 5 feet 2 ½ inches, native of Greenock, 18 months at sea before capture.

William Payne, 21 years of age, 5 feet 4 ½ inches, born Devon, 3 months at sea prior to capture, which lasted 8 years

Thomas Rees, 22 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches, native of Wales, 18 months at sea prior to captivity, which lasted 5 years

William Barnes, 18 years of age, 5 feet 7 inches, born Durham, in captivity since the age of 10, a boy at sea.

Nichol Nennis, 34 years of age, 5 feet 1 inch, born Cornwall, six years at sea prior to capture, which lasted 5 years

James Turner, 16 years of age, 5 feet, native of Bristol, one year at sea prior to captivity, which lasted 5 months.

John Nelson, 20 years of age, 5 feet 1 inch, born London, 5 months at sea prior to captivity, which lasted over 7 years.

George Patterson, 17 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches, born Dublin, one year at sea prior to captivity which lasted 5 months.

Mathew Jamieson, 22 years of age, 5 feet 9 ½ inches, born Greenock, 4 months at sea prior to captivity, which lasted 8 years.

[Adm 1/1737 D167]

***602. A regulating officer's expenses, May 1814**

In a letter, 8 May 1814, Captain Dobson asked the Admiralty to pay for his trips to Broad Pill and King road by coach to examine the new recruits. He listed 11 occasions since he was appointed in March 1813. The Admiralty wondered whether he had alternative means of travelling to King road and Pill beside coach hire and concluded "that as these applications are quite unusual, their lordships are surprized at[his] making the demand and refuse it accordingly."

[Adm 1/1737, D173]

***603. Young volunteers for the navy, May 1814**

Letter of 15 May 1814. Three young men volunteered for the navy, purportedly aged 16, 15, and 13. One, William Chester, was apprenticed to a brightsmith and had six years to serve. His master, who asked for his return, claimed he was only 15 years of age. The other two were the sons of a brass founder, one William Burgess of Bright Bow Bridge, Bedminster. He wrote the following letter on May 11, 1814:

Honorable Sir,

Perhaps you will excuse the liberty I have taken in writing to you, but I feel it is a duty so to do. On six day of this month, a child of mine, only 12 years of age, entered on board a man of war at the Royal Oak rendezvous on the Quay, Bristol, and on the ninth, another of my children, 16 years of age, being so much disturb'd in his mind on account of his Brother, he entered to be with him. I humbly pray that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may take my distressed state into consideration and grant that I may have my children restor'd to be again as I have a family of seven children of which the eldest that is entered is the principal support, I being a man that is very much afflicted and unable to support them without the help of my son, for which purpose I have been at great trouble and expense to bring him to be able to assist me in supporting the rest of my family, and if I am deprived of him, I shall be left in a state the most distressing. For which cause I humbly pray that I may become the object

of pitty to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and hope they will restore my children to me again, and I as in duty bound will ever pray,
William Burges

Brass Founder, Bright bow Bridge, Bedminster

Margin: refuse discharge if they are of the age Dobson describes

[Adm 1/1737 D180]

***604. Impressing a runaway apprentice, May 1814**

Letter of 31 May 1814: John Watkins, an apprentice at a local fishery, was impressed by Lieutenant Bostock from a trow on account of a letter from his master requesting he be so disciplined. He was 5 feet 5 inches high, and claimed he was 16 years 8 months, but “ appears to be about 18, has been at sea near 4 years, and is a fine young man, very fit for His Majesty’s Service.” His mother wanted him back, claiming he had simply gone from Gloucester to Bristol on business for her and had never been to sea. Captain Dobson made further investigations and discovered that because Watkins was baptised when he was about 3 years old, he was really closer to 19 years of age and had been employed on the Severn for four years prior to being bound an apprentice. Consequently, Dobson did not order him to be discharged.

Enclosure: Kingroad, 22nd May 1814

Sir, I beg to inform you that a Young Man named John Watkins, a runaway apprentice from Lord Somerville’s Fishery is on board one of the trows now laying in the Avon Mouth and he having obstinately refused to return to his proper vessel, I have to request you will please to take him on board your ship for some time. I am, Sir, for Richard Richards...James Carpenter.

[Adm 1/1737 D208, D231]

605. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 26 June 1814

Bristol, 26 June 1814

Sir, I have to request that you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that agreeable to their commands of the 12th ultimo, I am of opinion that one Lieutenant, two Midshipmen and twelve Men will be sufficient to execute the Service at this place, and that Lieutenant John Roche, the junior lieutenant, two midshipmen and eight Men may be discharged of it meets their Lordships’ approbation, as also one Rendezvous.

[Adm 1/1737 D 241]

606. Lieutenant William Pittman to John Barrow, 18 July 1814

Bristol 18 July 1814

Sir,

Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty I beg leave to further state to you (in the absence of Captain Man Dobson on leave)... that William Reynolds (description in the margin) was impressed by me on the morning of the 23rd of March last out of the Brig *Experiment* of Chepstow, James Chapman Master, in consequence of his not having an Affidavit as Mate of that Vessel, it not being signed either by the master or himself, and he being at work in the hold with the rest of the Men whilst a young man, brother to the Master (and who had an underage protection) was keeping an account of the Cargo at the Main Hatchway. I therefore thought it my duty to take him to the Rendezvous to be regulated by Captain Dobson. The Master came forward to claim him as his Mate, but it being proved that Reynolds did not keep the Log or an account of the Cargo, he was examined by the surgeon and being found a stout, healthy young man, he was sent by the direction of Captain Dobson on board H.M. S. *Enchantress* as a fit subject for his Majesty's Navy.

1st enclosure: Hereford Street 12th July 1814

Dear Sir,

I made an application through you in the last month to the Lords of the Admiralty for the discharge of William Reynolds, late mate of the *Experiment*, at present serving on board HMS *Magnificent*, which was refused on the grounds of his not being Mate of the *Experiment* according to the report of Captain Dobson at Bristol. Having now received an affidavit of James Chapman, Master of the *Experiment*, verifying the fact of William Reynolds being his chief mate at the time of his being impressed, I take the liberty of enclosing it to you and of renewing my application for his discharge, for which I trust under the circumstances there will be no objection. I am, Dear Sir, your faithful humble servant, John Ewen.

2nd enclosure: James Chapman, Mate of the *Experiment* of Chepstow, came before me Thomas Morgan Esquire, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Town of Cardiff, and voluntarily maketh oath that Wm Reynolds, of Chepstow, was Chief Mate of the *Experiment* and none other at the time he was pressed at Bristol on board the *Experiment* not on Shore, by Captain Dobson, regulating officer, in the month of March last past, and that the said Capt. Dobson obtained a Regular protection & refused to deliver either the Mate or protection. The said James Chapman could not detain the Vessel & was obliged to proceed to Cardiff where he shipped another Chief Mate. Sworn before me, at Cardiff, 2 July 1814, Tho. Morgan.

Margin 13 July Refuse again.

[Adm 1/1738, D301]

607. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 11 August 1814

Bristol 11 August 1814

Sir,

You will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that agreeable to their commands of 22nd Ultimo to report upon a letter of John Ellis, I have enquired into the different complaints.

By Mr Harries' account, the second master, the quantity of beer has been hoisted up every morning agreeable to the number victualled, and as much care taken that every person should have his allowance as possible, by placing a Centinel over it, but that some Men would drink much more than their allowance.

Mr Broom, Clerk, declared to his knowledge the full quantity was always served. Serjeant James Askey said he believed every Man had his allowance one day with another....I found that the Seamen not in Boats, the Marines and new raised men have been all served alike, and that Ellis's statement of four or five pints a day only being issued entirely failed, as I examined every new raised person that was on board at the time of the complaint. From all which, and no complaint having ever been made to Lieutenant Borlock, I am of opinion that the part of the charge is malicious and unfounded.

In regard to the complaint of the new raised men doing all the Work on the *Enchantress*, I beg leave to observe that the Ship's Company are all employed in Boat duty, boarding vessels, bringing on board Water &c and that all new raised men have certainly too little to do instead of too much.

The charges against Mr Harris, the second master, for receiving spirits to excuse William Parry from the impress, proved to be entirely false by Parry's statement, who declared he never said any such thing, as nothing of the kind had ever happened. He did lose some Spirits but did not say nor think any thing of Mr Harris in the business. He had been talking of losing Spirits, and Ellis had made it into the Story he related to their Lordships. Soon after Parry was impressed, I had him up to the Rendezvous to examine him, when he made no complaint.

I also beg leave to suggest to their Lordships to order him to discharge John Ellis as a dangerous, troublesome person. He is a landman and entered the 8th of July, at the same time I believe that he had been instigated to make these unfounded complaints, by whom I could not find out. The letter to your Lordships was written by him.

I inclose a letter from Lieutenant Bostock to me, and one from Mr Harris, which you will also be pleased to lay before their Lordships, and I enclose the inclosure received from you.

1st enclosure: HMS Enchantress, Kingroad, 10th August 1814

Sir,

I beg leave to assure you of my perfect innocence of the gross charge exhibited against me by John Ellis, a man on board the *Enchantress*. Far from ever taking a bribe, it has been my pride to discharge the trust reposed in me with the greatest promptitude and in such a manner as defy even the attempts of my Enemies, and so vile an action as sheltering a Man from the Impress for the sake of a little Rum is what never once entered my thoughts. And I trust Sir, you will consider my

innocence so clearly proved before you yesterday that you will so far condescend to clear my character from any interpretation of guilt as my Character (altho in an humble station) I hold dear. Until this I stand unimpeached during a Service of upwards of twenty-two years in His Majesty's Navy. I hope, Sir, you will pardon my intruding on your time and allow me the Honor to be, Sir, &c G. Harris, Second Master.

2nd enclosure: HMS *Enchantress*, Kingroad, 11th August 1814

Sir,

I beg leave to hand you a statement of the manner in which the Beer has been Issued to the Men and Boys on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* since under my command, viz. each morning the Proportion at the rate of one Gallon each for all borne on the books was hoisted on deck, and at the different meal times is a sentry placed over it to prevent any one from having more than another, with orders to this effect: thus all drank in common at the cask, The Boatswains excepted, who from their being frequently away on duty at the time of meals, had their proportion served to them separately. The precaution of placing a sentry over the cask was in consequence of some of the men being found drunk when they had their own rum at the beer. From the daily alterations in the number victualled, at times a Cask was a little more or less than the days allowance, but at the end of that supply of Beer...a breach was put against the number of gallons expended, and what appeared to be due was made up to them by issuing a proportion of spirits. And no complaint of short allowance of Beer or any kind of provision ever came to my knowledge. I have the honor to be,

Charles Bostock, Lieutenant and Commander.

[Adm 1/1738 D340]

608. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 14 August 1814

Bristol August 14th 1814

Sir,

I herewith inclose a letter to me from Mr. James Draw, Master of the *Swan* West Indianman just arrived, requesting the discharge of his apprentice Thomas Cole, who had been impressed and is now on board the *Chanticleer*, together with the Indenture, by which it appears he has not completed his time, which you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

I thought it proper to request Captain Thompson to state the Man's Case, that it might also have been inclosed herewith. A Copy of my letter to Captain Thomson I inclose, and his answer, which you will also be pleased to lay before their Lordships.

Margin: *Dobson was told that if there was legal action he would have to answer for the consequences.

[Adm 1/1738 D347]

***609. Marines serving on HMS *Enchantress*, August 1814**

Enclosure: Marines serving on HMS *Enchantress*, the tender in Kingroad,
11 August 1814

All had been “invalidated for harbour duty” they included:

Name	Rank	Age	Servitude	Birthplace
James Askie	Sgt.	41	21.5	Birmingham
John Comerford	Corp	28	10	Queen’s County
Arthur Harley	Drummer	39	19.5	Cheshire
John Kitmaugher	Private	54	10.5	Poland
Thomas Jones	Private	23	7	Shropshire
Thomas Cadman	Private	49	9.5	Cheshire
William Hutton	Private	44	21.5	Perthshire
Isaac Osborn	Private	40	9.25	Warwickshire
James Jones	Private	45	14.75	Montgomeryshire
Anthony Bernard	Private	25	4.75	Austria
William Williams	Private	53	18	Dublin
Mathew Cook	Private	60	19	Dublin
John Head	Private	43	6.5	Somerset
James Perkins	Private	38	9.5	Staffordshire
Robert Caine	Private	32	0	Middlesex

[Adm 1/1738 D 348a]

610. The impressment of a coach spring maker, October 1814

Enclosure in letter, dated 17 October:

To Richard Hart Davis Esquire, MP

The Memorial of Richard Higgins late Armourer of His Majesty’s Ship *Caledonia*

Sheweth, That your Memorialist was upwards of fourteen years previous to the year 1805 in the employ of Mr. John Clark of the City of Bristol, Coach maker in the capacity of a Coach Spring Maker, when he was impressed into his Majesty’s Service, although he had never been at Sea, and thereupon immediately sent off on foreign Service.

That your Memorialist has ever since that period to the present time continued in his Majesty’s Service and was Armourer of the said ship *Caledonia* for upwards of two years when the same was paid off and your Memorialist turned over to his Majesty’s Ship *The Prince Frederick*, now lying at Plymouth, from which he is now absent on Leave for one Month with his Wife and family in their City.

That your Memorialist always considering from the great want of hands during the late War with the European Continental Powers, now happily ended, any application for obtaining a Discharge could not be attended to, but now that period is arrived, your Memorialist ventures most humbly to solicit your interference to get him discharged that he may remain with his said Wife and family.

Bristol, 3rd October 1814. Richard Higgins.

We the undersigned beg leave to recommend the case of the above Memorialist to your consideration and to request you will use your endeavors with the Lords

Commissioners of the Admiralty for the purpose of obtaining his discharge.[7 signatures, including W. Ogilvie Porter, MD.]

2nd enclosure: Bristol October 16th 1814

To Captain Man Dobson, Regulating Officer,

Sir,

In respect to your enquiry after Richard Higgins, I beg leave to inform you that in the year 1803 he came to His Majesty's Rendezvous Royal Oak, Princes Street, and entered voluntarily, was then sent on board His Majesties Ship *Boadicca* on Kingroad. Some time after, there was an Information that the said Richard Higgins had Deserted from the *Boadicca* and was come to Bristol. Lieutenant Richard Williams and myself with the Gang went in pursuit of him several times and could not meet with him till on the 3rd day of November 1805, I went into a Public House in Princes Street Called the Hole in the Wall, where I saw him. As soon as I entered the Room, he said Barker's Blackguard. I looked at him and said What Mr. Higgins is that to you, he made answer a Poor Dick Higgins. I took hold of him and brought him to the Rendezvous with the Assistance of my son and another Man. He was then sent on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* on Kingroad. Some time after he was taken out of the *Enchantress* for Debt by the Silver Oar and sent to Newgate. I was informed that most of the time he was in Newgate he worked at his Trade, a Coach Spring maker for Mr. Clark, Coach Maker, his former Master, and on the 10th February 1807 he was Delivered up to the Rendezvous by the Civil Power and again put on board the *Enchantress*.

I have the honor to be, &c John Wakefield, Midshipman, Impress Service.

Margin: as a deserter cannot be discharged

[Adm 1/1738 D 444]

***611. The impressment of a brass worker, October 1814**

Bristol, 23 October 1814. Enclosure: A petition concerning James Crates from his parents, aged 68 and 70 years. Their son was employed in a brass company at Hanham “ & is the chief support of his aged parents was going down the river about 13th of this month & was imprest by HM ship *enchantment* which I hope your lordships will take into consideration to order his discharge has never been at sea or imploy'd on the water”

Margin: refuse

In a letter dated 3 December 1814, Dobson reported that from the affidavit of James Hill it appeared that Crates had not been to sea. He had worked for Pitt Savage and Company, brass founders from 12 December 1803 to 9 May 1813. Dobson therefore requested he be discharged. The Admiralty agreed.

[Adm 1/1738, D 451, 508]

612. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 23 October 1814

Bristol, 23rd Oct 1814

Sir,

I have to request that you will be pleased to inform ...the Admiralty that I have reason to believe that many men fit for His Majesty's Service are now engaged in the West India Ships outward bound from this port, and lying in King road. Also that many Seamen are in town who have been discharged for long service and cannot get employed, as the Ship Owners and Masters refuse to engage them in consequence of their having been in the King's Service. The Ships have their Lordships' protections, but considering their Lordships' order to impress all hands I ask advice.

[Adm 1/1738 D452]

613. Lieutenant Charles Bostock to Captain Man Dobson, 16 November 1814

Bristol, 16 Nov 1814

Enclosure from Lieutenant Charles Bostock, to Man Dobson.

Sir,

I beg to hand you a statement of the case of the person named in the margin [William Jones]. He was impressed on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* under my command on the 12th October 1814. He states he was impressed on board His Majesty's Ship *Terrible* in October 1806, remained in the Service until 21st February 1811 when he was taken prisoner on a Prize belonging to HM Cutter *Pioneer*, in French Prison til the 9th June 1814, discharged from HM Ship *Prince* 18 July following.

I am Sir, Charles Bostock

Margin: William Jones, able seamen, 29 years of age, at sea 19 years, a stout man very fit for HM Service and would wish to serve in this ship

2nd enclosure: To the Rt Hon the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

My Lords,

I beg leave humbly to petition yr Lordships for the liberation of my son who was impressed at Pill a few Days since & is now on board the *Enchantress*.

He has served some years in the Navy, was impressed on the 18th July 1806 & served on board His Majesty's Ship *Terrible*, Lord Henry Paulet[Powlett] Commander, from the above period till the 18th June 1810. He was then Drafted on board His Majesty's Cutter *Pioneer* 19 July 1810 & remained in said ship till the 21st July 1811, was taken Prisoner in a Prize belonging to same Cutter (*les trois Soeurs*) and remained in prison till the 9th June 1814.

My son has since been discharged...I hope therefore yr. Lordships will discharge him as my principal dependence arise from his Labor.

I am, My Lords, your most humble servant,

Thomas Jones, at the Cardiff boat, Bristol Back, Bristol.

[Adm 1/1738 D481]

614. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 16 November 1814

Bristol 16th November 1814

Sir,

I herewith inclose the case of Thomas Taylor, now on board the *Enchantress* as stated by Lieutenant Bostock, and a Letter from Mr John Grace in behalf of the same Man, which I have to request you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. Also that I have enquired respecting the statement of Mr Grace, and find that Hester Taylor lost two sons in the Service during the War, and that one paid £60 to find substitutes for him, since I have been here. That this young Man was a Registered Pill Waterman on the quota being furnished, and forfeited his protection by going to the West Indies last year as a Seaman, and that he was in one of the Pill boats when he was impressed, for all which their Lordships will probably be pleased to think proper to permit him to return to his situation of a Pill Waterman.

1st enclosure: A Statement of the Case of Thos Taylor, Ordinary seaman, now on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*, Broad Pill, the 12th November 1814

Thomas Taylor, Ord., Impressed on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* on the 7th October 1814, in consequence of our having his protection as a Pill Waterman duly corrected. He is 5 feet 5 inches high. Aged about 21 years, has been at sea or employed on water nearly 7 years.

Nb. He has had 1 bed complement 13s, Naval slops 7s 2d.

Charles Bostock, Lieutenant and Commander.

2nd enclosure.

Esteemed Friend, Captain Dobson,

The bearer of this Letter is Hester Taylor, a poor Woman who has her son Thomas lately pressed, who, we learn, had a Protection but who foolishly exceeded the bounds of it. We therefore beg leave to state many circumstances that may be relied on as facts & which will it is hoped induce Capt. Dobson to liberate Thomas Taylor. We hope in the first place that his having a Protection will have some weight & likewise that Capt. Dobson will be pleased to have Thomas Taylor's foot examined which we expect will be found to be in a bad state, but more especially to take into his most serious consideration the situation of the mother Hester Taylor, who having lost two sons that were pressed while in the King's Service. In the first place, her son John was pressed about seventeen years since & dyed a few years afterwards on board the *York* when lying off Jamaica, & about 10 years since, her son William Cray Taylor was pressed & served till he was shot dead on board the Kings Ship the *Elustrious*[Illustrious] when they where[were] taking the Isle of France, & about a year ago her son Joseph was pressed & Hester Taylor his Mother, being almost distracted with it as she had lost two Sons in the Kings service, gave all she had to help buy her son Joseph off. Under all these circumstances we hope Captain Dobson will be pleased to discharge Thomas Taylor.

Thy attention to the above facts will be esteemed a favour, by thy friend,

John Grace

Lodway, 11 Month 8th 1814.

615. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 20 November 1814

Bristol, 20th November 1814

Sir,

I have the honour to acquaint you that agreeable to your letter of the 26th September last, with an extract of Mr Bicknell's Report of the 22nd September inclosed, I have settled with the attorney of Mr. Robert Owen, in respect to Evan Francis, upon the most moderate terms I was able. By paying £38 17s – of which you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and also that I have to request their Lordships' permission to charge the same in my accounts.

[Adm 1/1738 D493]

616. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 27 November 1814

Bristol 27 Nov 1814

Sir,

Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty I herewith inclose an Account of Men raised at this place in the present week &c which you will be pleased to lay before their Lordships, and Also that Fourteen Transports arrived in the Float during the Week with Troops, the Crews of which I found consisted mostly of young men who had not served on board King's Ships, in consequence, after they had discharged the Troops, I directed Lieutenant Pitman to impress the fittest and best, which he accomplished yesterday with the assistance of the petty officers, Boats and Marines &c from the *Enchantress*, and *Resolute*, in the proportion of about one fourth of their number, in all Fifty four. They were sent down immediately to the *Enchantress*, and I shall proceed today to regulate them.

Also that about Two Hundred Seamen discharged from the Royal Navy for long Service are now in Bristol in want of employment; therefore the Transports can suffer no delay by the impressment of these Men.

I inclose a Letter from Lieutenant Champion, agent for the Transports on the subject, with a copy of my reply.

Enclosure: Man Dobson to Lieutenant Charles Champion, R.N.

Sir,

In answer to your Letter of this day, I have to inform you that the Men impressed this Morning from the Transports under your Charge will be regulated by me as soon as possible, when those fit for the King's Service will only be discharged by the commands of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

I am at the same time to apprise you that upwards of Two Hundred Men discharged from the Royal Navy for long service and in want of employment are now in Bristol. Therefore, the Masters under your command can have no difficulty in obtaining as many prime Seamen as they have occasion for to fill up their compliment[complement]. Should notwithstanding any difficulty arise, I shall at all times be ready to give every assistance in my power that your division of transports may not be delayed.

The circumstances of any inattention to yourself could only arise from the nature of the service the Officers and the Men were employed upon, and the necessity for expedition, as also probably your not being known to the Marines, I am, your very humble servant, Man Dobson.

(*Dobson was ordered by the Admiralty to discharge the Transport man and he reported that he had “immediately sent directions for Thirty of the Men impressed from the Transports to prevent any pretext for delay.”)

[Adm 1/1738 D 499, 509, 510]

617. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 15 December 1814

Bristol, 15th December 1814.

Sir,

Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 12th instant, to enquire particularly into a Statement of Complaint made by Lieutenant Hewitt, commander of the *Sir George Osborn* Merchant Ship.

You will be pleased to inform their Lordships that I have examined all the people named in the margin, from which it appears to me that the *Sir George Osborn* in coming to an anchor on the 8th instant in King Road, being moored with the *Two Bowers*, that about seven in the evening from mismanagement at about half Ebb, the *Sir George Osborn* being at single anchor with a large scope of cable out, it then blowing hard westerly and a good deal of Sea, broke her sheer and came athwart the *Haughty*. The Boatswain had the watch, called all hands, and every exertion was made to extricate H.M. Brig from her perilous situation by sending hands on board the Ship to loose her head sails &c, in the meantime the *Haughty's* jib boom was carried away against the Ship's Mainmast, the Cap of the Bowsprit being fixed within the foremost Main Shrouds rendered it necessary to cast off or cut them, which being done and the head Sails filled, the Ship was got clear with the loss to the *Haughty* of the jib boom, the rubbing of the Cable &c.

The Boatswain's Mate, Richard Robertson, declared that on his going on board the Ship with people to assist, he was taken by the Collar and shook by a person, who he afterwards found to be the Master, who demanded what he was that dared to give instructions on board his Ship, that he the Boatswain shoved the person off from him, but never struck him, saying he was on his duty &c.

Richard Robertson appeared to be a Seaman and bears an excellent character. Mr Hugh Scott, the mate of the *Sir George Osborn*, said that he saw the Boatswain strike Lieutenant Hewitt but he affirming as positively that the *Haughty* came on board the *Sir George Osborn*, and the night being very dark makes his statement of any blow being given doubtful. The Boatswain was very angry at the un-seamanlike manner in which the *Sir George Gibson* was conducted.

The impressment of the three Men under the circumstances would have been highly improper, even had they not been discharged men for long service, without leaving men in their stead, which Mr Thomas Lawless the Midshipman did not do, but the *Sir G. Osborn* received from the shore about nine o'clock the Pilot and two men, and the gunner's mate William Symonds was left with seven men on board her for some time after the ships was clear, in order to do anything that was wanted.

The Master, Boatswain's Mate, Gunner's mate were all on board the *Haughty* at the time *Sir G Osborn* went on board her. The Master was unwell, but went upon deck. He speaks in the highest terms of the conduct of the Boatswain and the Gunner, and but for their Seamen like conduct and exertions, it also appears to me the *Haughty* would certainly have been dismasted and otherwise much injured and lost.

Margin: 16 December, If any men have been impressed, enter them immediately and then discharge.

[Adm 1/1738 D 499]

618. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 14 December 1814

Bristol, 14th December 1814

Sir,...I herewith inclose the case of William, alias Jeremiah Stanley as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which is correct, and I have to request you will be pleased to lay the same before their Lordships.

1st enclosure: East India House 6 December 1814

To John Wilson Croker Esquire

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, by order of the Court of Directors of the Honble. East India Company, that a Deserter from their service ...has entered on board the Tender at Bristol, and I am directed to request that an order for his delivery to Captain Parker the Company Officer recruiting at Bath may be forwarded either to him, or the Officer Commanding the Tender as may be thought expedient. I have the honor to be &c,

George Billingham, Superintending Field Officer

2nd enclosure: ...William (alias) Jeremiah Stanley[19 years of age, 5ft 5 inches high, Fair Complexion, Brown Hair, Hazle Eyes, Stout Made] came to the Rendezvous on the evening of the 15th Ultimo and volunteered for His Majesty's Navy[rated Landman] On his being regulated by you, Sir, the next morning he said he was determined to enter for the Navy and that he was no Apprentice. He was therefore examined by the Surgeon and being found stout healthy young man, he was sent by your direction on board HMS *Enchantress* as a fit subject for His Majesty's Navy.

I beg leave further to observe to you, Sir, that in my accompanying you on board the *Enchantress* on the morning of the 25th ultimo to regulate the new raised men, you questioned Stanley respecting his having deserted from an East India Companies Recruiting Party, he said he was not more than two or three hours in the company of the party, and that he was so much in liquor that he did not what he was about and therefore could not be sworn in. He also begs to remain in His Majesty's Navy. I have the honor, &c,

William Pitman, Lieutenant, Impress Service

Margin: Discharge refused

[Adm 1/1738 D 526]

619. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 19 February 1815

Bristol 19 Feb 1815

Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 17th instant, I herewith inclose the case of William Griffin as stated by Lieutenant Bostock, which I believe to be quite correct, and have to request you will be pleased to lay the same before their Lordships.

Also that I saw the Man on Tuesday last on board the *Enchantress* when examining the new raised men, but I neither observed in him nor heard of any deficiency of hearing, nor does it appear he is an apprentice, and that he will remain on board the *Enchantress* for their Lordships' commands. I return the inclosures and I have the honor to be...Man Dobson

(*Lieutenant Bostock's statement reveals Griffin volunteered on 8th December 1814. He is "21 Years of Age, 5 feet 3 inches high, stout made, has served seven years to a cooper, is active and particularly fit for His Majesty's Service.")

Enclosure: 39 Harley Street, 15 February 1815

Sir,

I am sorry to be under the necessity of troubling you with an application for the discharge of another Boy, named William Griffin, who has entered on board the *Enchantress* at Bristol. I inclose his Father's letter and a medical certificate of his deafness. I should be obliged by a communication of His Lordships determination on the case, and I remain respectfully...

Edward Protheroe

Margin: no appearance of deafeness; discharge cannot be granted

[Adm 1/1739 D59]

620. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 23 February 1815

Bristol, 23rd Feb 1815

Sir,

Agreeable to the Commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Navy of the 21st instant, I herewith inclose the Case of George Miller, as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which is correct. I have to request you will be pleased to lay the same before their Lordships, and that Mr. Gibson, the Master of the *Martha Row*, on asking me to discharge George Miller, declared he would not ship any man discharged from Men of War, although numbers are here in want of employment, indeed almost starving. I return the inclosures, and I have the honor to be...

Man Dobson.

Enclosure: from Lieutenant Pitman to Dobson

Sir,

George Miller (description in the margin) was impressed by me on the morning of the 16th Instant out of the ship *Martha Row*, West Indiaman of this Port, Gibson Master. On my going on board, I asked the Mate for the Articles or Ship's Protection, as she was laden for the West Indies. He said they had neither, and on examining the men I questioned Miller as to what he was. He said he was a man before the Mast and had been to sea 3 years but had no protection, in consequence of which I ordered him to the Rendezvous and on his being regulated by you, Sir, he said he had been 3 years on board a Transport, that he was a Man before the Mast, and was to have £3 per month. He was therefore examined by the surgeon and being found a stout healthy young man, he was sent by your directions on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*.

Wm. Pitman, Lieutenant, Impress Service.

(Miller's description: 19 years of age, 5 feet 8 inches high, Sallow complexion, Brown hair, Hazel eyes, Slight made, rated ordinary)

2nd enclosure: Bristol 16 February 1815

Sir, We take the liberty of requesting your interference at the Admiralty on behalf of a Man impress'd in this Port from onboard the *Martha Row*, an outward bound West India Man, on board which ship he was second mate. This Man's Name is George Miller. He has served for five years on board the transport *Isis*, No. 249, John Strachan, Master.

This Man's having already been in the Transport service and being the support of an aged father, we trust will (under your kind interference) have some influence on the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. We shall feel very much oblig'd by your exerting your influence towards obtaining his liberation, and are, respectfully, Sir,

Charles Ridout, Richard Vaughan, W L Clarke.

[Adm 1/1739 D59]

621. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 17 March 1815

Bristol, 17th March 1815

Sir,

Agreeable to the commands of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the 15th instant, I have directed the Impressment of Seamen to cease, as also the entering of men for His Majesty's Service in Bristol, as also by the *Enchantress*, with which you will be pleased to inform their Lordships, and that I will wait their Lordships commands to discharge Officers and Men.

[Adm 1/1739 D 88]

622. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 18 March 1815

Bristol, March 18th 1815 concerning William Knowles.

1st enclosure:

Sir,

I have leave to state...that William Knowles (Description in Margin) came voluntarily to the rendezvous on the 20th June, 1814, and entered for His Majesty's Service...he said that he was a shipwright and that he was determined to go to sea. He was, therefore, examined by the surgeon and being found a stout healthy young man, he was sent on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*.

I have the honor to be,

Wm Pitman, Lieutenant.

(Description: 18 years of age, 5 feet 4 ½ inches high, Fair Complexion, Light Brown Hair, Blue eyes, stout made, born in Somerset, rated Landman.)

2nd enclosure:

Sir,

Pardon the Liberty I take of troubling you with these lines from a distressed Father & Mother of a Large family of nine children, the Elder of which is the Cause of my troubling you. My son William Knowles being the oldest of my nine, I with much difficulty (being Poor) Put him apprentice to Mr Hillhouse, Shipwright, in Hottwell Road, Entirely with a view that my son may in some future time assist me to support my family as I am nothing more than a Poor gardiner. But to my great dissatisfaction and grief, my son unfortunately entered in His Majesty's Sea Service at Bristol in June last and is now on Board HMS *Tigris* on the Cork Station.

He now repenting of his Misconduct and being very anxious to be released from the Service and myself exceeding desirous to Release him, the want of ability Induces me to request the favour of your Interest in getting his discharge as soon as may Possibly be Convenient which would most Worthy Sir ever gratefully oblige, your very humble servant,

William Knowles,

Yeaton[Yatton], County of Somerset, March 19th 1815.

Please to direct for me to the Care[of] Mr Smith, No 3 Upper Berkley Place.

3rd enclosure: Edward Prothero, MP to J.W. Croker, Esquire, Secretary to the Admiralty

Sir,

Permit me to request that you will have the kindness to lay the enclosed letter from William Knowles praying for the discharge of my son before the Lords of the Admiralty and to communicate to me their Lordships' determination on the case. I have the honor to remain, very respectfully....

Edward Prothero

Margin: entered and therefore discharge refused

[Adm 1/1739 D91]

623. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 2 April 1815

Bristol 2 April 1815.

Sir,

I have to request that you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the Man named in the Margin was impressed on the 31st Instant. He produced an American protection and a Certificate from Lieutenant Vicars, which I inclose herewith.

The Man's dialect bespeaks him from the North of England, the protection does not appear to be correct, the Certificate is loosely given, and having arrived in Bristol in a brig belonging to Dublin a few days ago from Oporto, I believe him to be an Englishman. He is very stout and able for the King's Service. I have therefore to request their Lordships commands respecting him.

(*William Hughes had a protection from the port of Savannah, Georgia. He was described as 31 years of age, 5 feet 6 ½ inches tall, dark complexion, blue eyes, brown hair, a scar on forehead, and one under his chin and one on his right shin. He was born, it claimed, in Salem Massachusetts. The Admiralty claimed he was a British subject and refused to discharge him.)

[Adm 1/1739 D128]

624. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 9 April 1815

Bristol, 9th April 1815

Sir,

I have to request that you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I intend to direct the Commander of the *Enchantress* to move her from the Avon to King road, for the health and good order of the people, and where she will have a better opportunity to raise Men, provided it meets their Lordships' approbation.

[Adm 1/1739 D145]

625. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 10 April 1815

Bristol 10th April 1815

Sir,

I herewith inclose the case of William Jones, said to be master of the sloop *Lady Mary*, as stated by Lieutenant Pitman. I have to request that you will be pleased to lay the case before their Lordships, and I have no doubt that it will appear that this is one of the many fraudulent cases such as has been before exhibited by me from this place in order to keep William Jones for the Service of his Country, as the Vessels register points out that William Downing is the real Master, and his petition points out that he was serving on board her, which he also told me. Therefore the indorsement of William Jones as Master is a fraud to keep him from the Impress. I inclose the inclosures and have to honor to be....

Man Dobson.

(*William Jones was impressed on the 6th April. He was described as 23 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches tall, ruddy complexion, brown hair, hazel eyes, stout made, 8 years at sea, rated able seaman. The Admiralty was not convinced he was the master of the ship and refused to discharge him.)

[Adm 1/1739 D146]

626. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 19 April 1815

Bristol, 19th April 1815

Sir,

I herewith inclose the case of John Niblett, said to belong to the Radnor Militia, as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which is correct. Also that the man appeared to be to be a seafaring young man & very fit for his Majesty's Naval service.

(* Niblett was impressed on the 31st March 1814 out of the sloop from Chepstow. He was 24 years of age, 5 feet 5 ½ inches tall, fair complexion, grey eyes, fair hair, stout made, born in Gloucestershire, time at sea uncertain, rated a seafaring landman. The Admiralty was prepared to discharge him, if he had been a Radnor militiaman.)

Enclosure: Chepstow, April 5th 1815

Sir, A man by the name of John Niblett belonging to your regiment and who since then being disbanded has got his livelihood by going in a Sloop belonging to me, has had the misfortune to be impressed at Bristol. An Application to the regulating Captain there stating his belonging to the Royal Radnor Militia, that officer says he cannot be released without his Colonel will write to the Admiralty, who will immediately send an order for his release. His Wife takes the Journey on foot to solicit the favour of your interest to get him free. I assure you Sir, it will be an act of great humanity and confer a lasting obligation on her as also on your obedient servant,

John C. Smith.

The Sloop is named the *Wye* of Chepstow.

[Adm 1/1739 D 155]

***627. An orphan boy enters the navy, March 1815**

Bristol, 21st April 1815, a letter concerning George Richards, boy of 14–15 years who entered on 28th March 1815 on board the *Enchantress*. He was 4 feet 7 inches high, “a fine healthy Lad very fit for His Majesty's Service.” The Admiralty was prepared to discharge him on repayment of the bounty.

Enclosure: No 29, Hott Well Road, Bristol, April 15 1815

Sir,

I take the liberty to address you concerning soliciting the favour of you to become my friend, and I flatter myself you will, if consistent with

propriety, suffice it then to observe I am of good connections as the daughter of a Dignified Divine, as such acquainted many years with the Honble. John Olmius and Family, likewise with Lord St Vincent. My connection may induce you to pay attention to the petition I now present, which concerns a most indiscreet Lad by name George Richard, a native of Bristol, aged between 14 and 15 years, who entered on board of the Sloop of War at Broad Pill with a friend of his by name William Smith, who I find is liberated. The poor Lad I now Petition for has no father or mother. It is true he has a poor Grand Mother aged 80 years and it is upon that account I make my application to you. Words are not sufficient to tell her affliction and it is Humanity alone that induces me[to] try if any thing can be done in order to liberate him, and with great respect, I beg leave to remain, Sir, your most obedient servant, Charlotte Gaman.

[Adm 1/1739 D160]

628. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 7 May 1815

Bristol 7th May 1815

Sir,

I am of opinion it would be best for the good of the King's Service in raising Men, also for the good order of the Shipwrights, if the same indulgence was renewed to the Shipbuilders of Bristol in regard to their Men, or by your Lordships' commands contained in your letter of the 1st June, 1813, now at this time, before the Ships' Carpenters arrive from the West Indies, and to request their Lordships' commands therein.

[Adm 1/1739 D193]

629. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 12 May 1815

Bristol 12th May 1815

Sir, I herewith inclose a letter from Lieutenant Rubidge, and a petition from Mary Parfit, wife of Henry Parfit, now on board the *Enchantress*, which you will be pleased to lay before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. Also that I directed the Lieutenant on his arrival here to open a rendezvous at Pill, where I have no doubt he will succeed in raising men, and should their Lordships comply with his request by commanding that Henry Parfit be discharged from the *Enchantress* to be replaced in his Gang, I am of opinion he will, from his local knowledge and ability, be of great use.

Enclosure: Lieutenant Rubidge to Captain Dobson

Sir,

Henry Tudor Parfitt who entered into my Gang on the 26th of April and who was from his zeal for the Service and local knowledge of the place of the greatest use

to me in my Duty of raising men for His Majesty's Fleet, during the short time he was with me, having been discovered to be a Deserter and sent on board HM Ship *Enchantress* on the 3rd of May.

I have to beg, Sir, if it were possible that he might be restored to my Gang, as I firmly believe he will faithfully discharge his Duty, and, as I have above stated, be an acquisition to me for His Majesty's Impress Service at this Place.

I am...R H Rubidge, Lieut. Impress Service.

2nd enclosure: Pill, 7 May 1815, Mary Parfitt to Captain Dobson,
Sir,

With the most humble submission, beg leave to state to you for your kind consideration & advice that Henry Parfitt, late belonging to the Impress Service in this place, is now detained & in active service on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* at King road. His exertions to obtain men for His Majesty's Navy has in this instance created him enemies and he was inform'd against as being a deserter from His Majesty's Ship *Pyramus* (long since out of commission). He does not wish by any means to deny the facts from you, Sir, but admits he did belong to that ship in quality of Quarter-Master and that having been permitted to go on Shore upon liberty, out staid his time and fearing the consequence attending his going on board again, left the service and thereby forfeited the wages and prize money then due to him. It is his sincere wish, Sir, to be permitted to remain in the Impress Service at Pill as well as the Lieutenants who commands them, not only because his active service in the Boat are necessary, but also to convince his enemies that altho they have done their utmost to do him an injury, he is still determined to do his duty. I most sincerely hope, Sir, you will be pleased to permit him to remain in the Impress Service at Pill where the whole of his family now resides. I am, with the greatest respect...

Mary Parfitt

[Adm 1/1739 D196]

630. A black American impressed, May 1815

Enclosure: A Statement of the Case of Charles Brayton, seaman, now on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress*, King road, this 26th May 1815.

Charles Brayton, AB, [able seaman] was taken out of the *Elizabeth* West Indiaman of this Port on the 15th August 1813 as an American Prisoner of War. He then offered to serve as Cook in this ship until Peace with America. He says he was born in Rhode Island, Massachusetts (sic). He is 26 years of age, 5 feet 11 inches high, and a Black. Charles Bostock, Lieutenant.

2nd enclosure: HMS *Enchantress*, Pill, May 25th 1815

Sir,

I beg leave to state for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I was detained as an American Prisoner on the fifteenth day of July, 1813 by this ship and on being brought on board of her, was told I might go to Prison or Remain where I was till Peace should be made with America, which being the case, and from my never entering HM Service I hope their Lordships will be graciously pleased to Order my Discharge as a means of facilitating my return to my native country. I

have an aged Mother with a large helpless Family whose only support I was, humbly requesting you will be pleased to lay this before their Lordships.

I beg leave to subscribe myself, your most obedient servant, Chas Brayton.
discharge ordered

[Adm 1/1739 D235]

631. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 31 May 1815

Bristol, 31 May 1815

Sir,

I inclose herewith a letter from Mr Andrew Pope, Master of the Society of Merchants at Bristol, requesting to have thirteen Pill watermen protected in the room of thirteen who are dead, or have gone into the service of the Customs and Excise &c for whom a Quota has been given as by their Lordships' order.

[Adm 1/1739 D 242]

632. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 14 June 1815

Bristol 14 June 1815

Sir,

I herewith inclose the Case of Evan Roberts, an apprentice, as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which is correct.

I have to request that you will...lay the same before their Lordships. Also that the letter inclosed is not the letter of Diana Thomas but of Mr. John Morgan, land Surveyor of Excise at this place, who promised to produce an affidavit that Evan Roberts has not been at Sea before he was bound apprentice. In the course of the day the Man was impressed...Mr Morgan came to the Rendezvous but refused giving it[the affidavit] and made use of very improper language.

Enclosed: The Humble Petition of Diana Thomas.

To the Right Honorable Lords of His Majesty's Admiralty

Sheweth, That your Lordships Petitioner is the widow of the late Elias Thomas, Master and part owner of the brig *Jupiter*, a coasting vessel. Being on the Sixteenth day of February last at the Port of Liverpool, Evan Roberts of Pwllheli in the County of Carvannon, shoemaker, did then and there bind himself a Servant or Apprentice to your Lordships Petitioner's late Husband, for and during the term of Three Years for the sum of Twenty-five Pounds viz. six pounds for the first year, Eight pounds for the second, and Eleven pounds for the third year. As the said Owen was not then furnished with proper requisites, the sum of five pounds has been paid him to buy wearing apparel, Bedding &c.

That your Lordships Petitioner's apprentice was Yesterday Morning taken out of his Bed on board the said Vessel called the *Jupiter* by a Press Gang to their Quarters. The Indenture has been since presented to the Regulating Captain, who refused to

release the said apprentice unless some considerable Persons came forward and swore that he knew the said Evan Roberts from his youth and that he never was at sea. Your Lordships sees the difficulty to obtain the required Proof to the satisfaction of Your Lordships' Regulating Captain at this Port. I trust that your Lordships impress more Liberality with this matter than adding troubles to the distressed state of your Lordships' Petitioner, that under the existing facts your Lordships will be pleased to direct the Petitioner's Apprentice be discharged, that he may return to his Duty, and in so doing your Petitioner ever prays...

Diana Thomas, 1 Guinea Street Bristol, 11 June 1815

Margin: refer it

[Adm 1/1740 D280]

633. Captain Man Dobson to John Barrow, 23 June 1815

Bristol June 23, 1815

Sir,

I herewith inclose the Case of Philip Williams, said to be an apprentice, as stated by Lieutenant Pitman, which is correct.[Please] lay the same before their Lordships, and also...inform them that Mr Drew tendered the indentures to me, but said the young man had not been in his employ for nearly twelve months, that he never expected that he would return to his employ, and that he only tendered the indentures to obtain his release from the King's Service. Neither the Indentures assigned nor were they on board the *Avon* during the time the young man served on board her.

Enclosure: Bristol June 21 1815

Sir, I beg leave to request that you will do me the favour of laying the following case before the Lords ...of the Admiralty, and have the honor to be, Sir, Humphrey Jeffreys

On Friday last, only a few hours previous to the arrival of the order to Capt. Man Dobson R.N. at this Port to discontinue the impressing of seamen, Philip Williams, a seaman lately arrived from the West Indies in the ship, *Avon* (of which I am a part owner) was impressed, and I am informed is now on board HMS *Enchantress*. If the order ...had not been published immediately after the impress of this man, I should not have presumed to trouble their Lordships with any application in his favour, being well aware that he is liable to serve in the Navy, having made the voyage without being a regularly Indentured apprentice....But the discontinuing of the Impress leads me to presume that Seamen are not immediately wanted for his Majesty's Service, and therefore I humbly beg leave to represent for their Lordships' consideration that ...Philip Williams, together with his brother George Williams, sons of a very poor but worthy clergyman in Glamorganshire went to sea in October last in the ship *Avon*, having been taken on board at the particular request of Mr. Daniel, West India merchant here. George, the father's favourite son, died in Tobago after three days' illness, and now the impress of Philip had added severely to the affections of the parents who were looking anxiously for his return home. I therefore indulge the hope that if the man can be discharged without prejudice to the Service,

their Lordships will have the goodness to afford such relief as the case will admit of. Not having the honor of being known to Captain Dobson, I requested my friend Lord Colville to make an application to him, hoping that under the circumstances I have mentioned he would have it in his power to give the man a discharge. Lord Colville did write to him, and has favour'd me with his reply, which, for their Lordships' further information, I take the liberty to inclose.

2nd enclosure: Lieutenant William Pitman said he impressed Philip Williams[19 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high, fair complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, stout made, rated ordinary] at some distance from the Rendezvous. On taking him there I questioned him as to what ship he belonged to, He said that he was an apprentice to Mr Drew, Merchant of this Port, and had been two Voyages to the West Indies in the ship *Severn*, Richard Drew master, but that he had run from that employ some months ago and had ship'd himself on board the Ship *Avon*, Swain, Master, belonging to Messrs. Rankin and Jefferies, merchants of this Port, in which vessel he had just returned from the West Indies. On my going on board the said ship to examine the articles, Philip Williams was put down as a boy and that he had run at Tobago; notwithstanding he returned in the ship. On asking the Master the reason of his having put him down Run, he said he did it to prevent him being Imprest, as he had not yet his Indentures. On Williams being regulated by you, Sir, he still persisted that he was an apprentice to Mr Drew, but as...no person came forward at the time to claim him as such, he was sent...on board His Majesty's Ship *Enchantress* as a fit subject for H.M. Navy.

I have the honor...Wm Pitman

3rd enclosure: Captain Man Dobson to Lord Colville, Bristol, June 19th 1815.
My Lord,

I am just favoured with your letter of the seventeenth instant from the post office, and I should be glad if it was in my power to render your Lordship any service.

Since I have been in charge of this duty, I never have myself released any person after regulating him, but at all times if any thing came to my knowledge in anyone's favour afterwards, to make it clear he should be discharged. I then laid the same before the Admiralty for an Order. The Young man in question being liable to the Impress, I therefore cannot write to request the Admiralty to direct me to discharge him; indeed I informed Mr. Drew, who called on me respecting him.

An application from your Lordship to the Admiralty in the young man's behalf will cause his case to be fully stated, but I cannot venture to say what they may determine. They would only discharge him on a request being made to pay money to find substitutes for him. He is rated ordinary seaman.

I have the honor to be, My Lord...Man Dobson

Margin: case was referred

[Adm 1/1740 D 283]

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